

CANADA'S HISTORY MAGAZINE

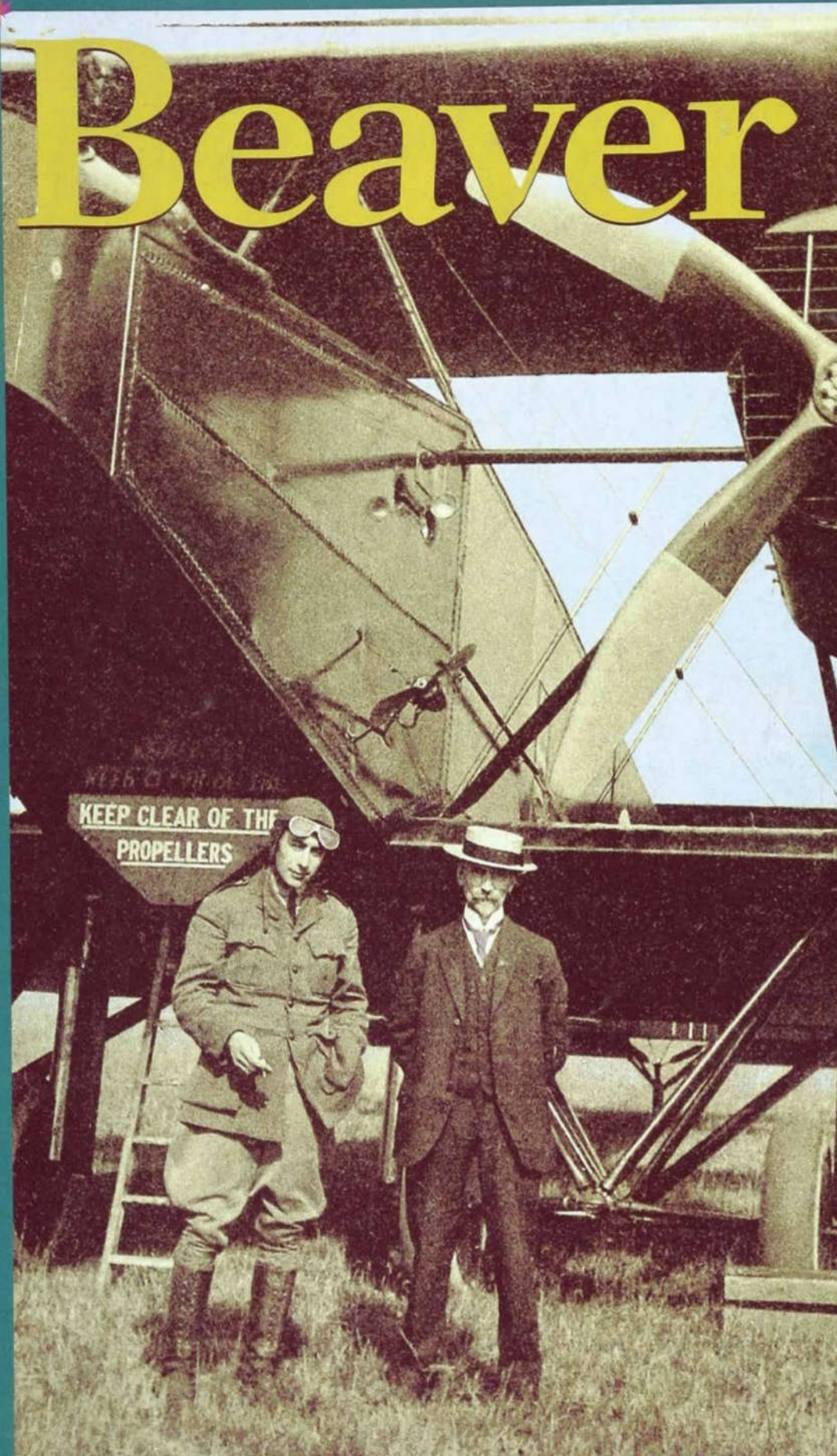
The Beaver

JUNE | JULY 2000 \$4.95

**Eight Who
Hanged**

*Mystic
Numbers*

*Flying to
Cairo*



**Partners
in good taste**

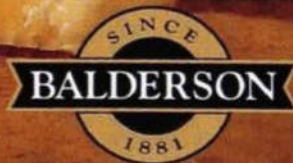
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JUNE | JULY 2000

VOL. 80:3

FEATURES

- 8 A Daring Young Man in His Flying Machine**
by Guy Simser
Breaking the London-Cairo flight record.
- 16 Arthur's Secret**
by Pat MacAdam
Was America's 21st president Canadian?
- 20 Ten Means Death**
by Joyce Wright
Mystical numbers of the French and Huron.
- 26 Passage from India**
by Philip Jensen
A boatload of Sikhs contest the colour bar.
- 31 The Ancaster Eight**
by Dennis Duffy
Hanging quells dissent from the War of 1812.
- 35 Mrs. Dignam's Pursuit**
by Janet Bonellie
Art and liberation in Victorian Canada.
- 38 Bringing History to Life**
by Shane Peacock
The play's the thing in Millbrook, Ontario.
- 40 Fallout from the Family Tree**
by Douglas How
One man's search for his Yorkshire roots.



16



40



26

35



COLUMNS

- 6 Explorations**
Canada's Presbyterian legacy
- 54 Christopher Moore**
Histories of the inexplicable

DEPARTMENTS

- 2 Letters**
Canada's century
- 4 Currents**
St. Roch II sails
McHistory nuggets
Crystal anniversary
- 44 Reviews**
Good medicine
Unfriendly skies
Party Québécois
Native twilight
- 51 Booknotes**
Takes on the twentieth century

PLUS

- 53 The Society**
Berton Award ceremony
- 56 Album**
Idyll

On the cover: Flight-Lieutenant Harry Yates next to his Handley Page bomber, with his father, 1919. Photo courtesy the estate of Harry Yates.

Mood elevator

I JUST READ WILLIAM NEVILLE's article in your latest issue ["Sustaining Confederation," February/March 2000]. It was excellent but ended on a very pessimistic note. I then turned the page and saw the painting by Lawren Harris, *First Snow, North of Superior*. My mood suddenly changed and it struck me that Neville had missed something very important. We may be divided by severe differences in language and substantial differences in culture, but we share a common land and a common history. There are a lot of people in English-speaking Canada, including myself and William Neville, who understand that the need of the Quebecois to preserve their language and culture is part of our culture. If we can get the people of Quebec and the rest of English-speaking Canada to understand that we will be OK.

In the end, I believe Lawren Harris more than I believe William Neville.

Ron Clark
Etobicoke, Ontario

King's kickoff

I WAS INTERESTED TO SEE THE PHOTO on page 8 ["Sustaining Confederation," February/March 2000] of Sir Wilfrid. Your readers may be interested to know that another (future) prime minister is also in that shot. Visible just beyond Laurier's right hand above the small flag is William Lyon Mackenzie King, enjoying himself immensely. The occasion is the first public appearance in the political career of Mackenzie King. Sir Wilfrid, along with two other cabinet members, Rodolphe Lemieux and George Graham, have come to Berlin to kick start the political life of the country's best known civil servant. The decorated stand has been set up in Berlin's Victoria Park, and if King moves his gaze a bit to his left he can almost see the house in which he was born in 1874. Also on the stage was John King, who, some twenty-five years earlier, had almost become the Liberal/Reform candidate in this riding. In the speech Laurier is giving, he promises to recommend that the Department of Labour be made into a separate cabinet ministry. He does not, however, publicly declare that it will go to Mackenzie King. That though is what the crowd of hometowners reads between the lines, and their cheering rings throughout the town. King did win the election. Victoria Park in Berlin/Kitchener was the setting for many political events involving Mackenzie King, but this kickoff to his career on September 24, 1908, ranks as one of the highlights.

I would be grateful if anyone could identify any of the other people on this stage. I can be reached on e-mail at <rmills@koofm.com>.

Rych Mills
Kitchener (Berlin), Ontario

ERRATUM

Oral historian and storyteller Louis Bird, the subject of "Spoken Word" [page 42, April/May 2000], was incorrectly identified as Elder-in-residence at the University of Manitoba. In fact, since October 1999 Mr. Bird has been affiliated with the Centre for Rupert's Land Studies at the University of Winnipeg. *The Beaver* regrets the error.

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Thanks for the memories

YOU CAN'T IMAGINE THE EXCITEMENT the article on the Mallabar family [December 1999 / January 2000] caused around here. Just that name conjures up memories of the magic moments when the costumes arrived for the parts we had been rehearsing for what seemed forever. As if that weren't enough, your article specifically names the *Chimes of Normandy*, which was my first involvement with Mallabar's, for in the spring of 1941 Yarmouth County Academy mounted a full production at the old Strand Theatre in the town of Yarmouth.

Judging by the chorus photo (above, no principals in sight) half the high school took part—all the way from us lowly Graders to Grade 12. Thank you for the nostalgic nudge.

Gwen Guiou Trask
Yarmouth, Nova Scotia

A challenge

OVERALL, THE FEBRUARY/MARCH 2000 issue was a fine summary of the last century. A serious problem is created by Christopher Moore's commentary on the writers of history, however, because his admiration of our "anglo-national" historians is wrong-footed. On page 85 he reduces Quebec historians and Quebec history to a footnote.

Part of the problem is that Canada's National History Society implicitly, and perhaps unconsciously, has not struggled successfully to find bridges (as over the Ottawa River) between two nations in Canada; the one recognized internationally on the world's stage, and the other historical nation in Quebec. Likewise, these two nationalisms constitute Canada. This has always been the fundamental question in Canadian society, with the likes of C. Moore who can read French, but who have not or cannot fully grasp what has happened in the past and is happening today. Is it beyond the capacity of Canada's National History Society to find a francophone historian in Quebec, or elsewhere, capable of commenting on the writers of history in and outside Quebec, and doing so in English? Will the *Beaver* rise to the needs of the histories in Canada?

Allen R. Kear
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Boston vs. Brantford

IT WON'T DO, gentlemen. In your February/March issue ["Conquering Distance," p. 56] your references indicate that Bell and the telephone originated in Canada. My references indicate the invention occurred in Boston, Massachusetts. Bell spilled some acid on his trousers in the course of his work and said, "Come here, Mr. Watson, I want you." Watson, in another room, heard the words on his instrument and came immediately with the news. And thus the telephone was born in Boston in 1874.

George Greenwood
Fairfax, Virginia

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The dispute over the birthplace of the telephone has been a matter of debate between Canadians and Americans since 1874, when, as Mr. Greenwood asserts, the breakthrough moment occurred in Boston. But it is Bell's own statement that the important work leading to and following this event took place in Brantford, Ontario. For more, see the article "Phone Flick Flaileid," April/May 2000, p. 13.

Finer points

DR. GRANATSTEIN'S ARTICLE ["Joining Forces," February/March 2000] is objective and well written until he casts his own judgment on the Somalia Affair.

He accuses Canadian soldiers of "murder of Somalis"; murder is a well-defined crime in our Criminal Code. To my knowledge, no one has been convicted of murder; it is therefore improper and inaccurate to label the military in this manner. The author cannot substitute himself for a court of law and register a conviction where none was recorded.

The author gets mired in Somalia; in fairness, Canada was not alone to experience problems in Somalia. France, Belgium, and the United States also experienced considerable difficulties. In no way does this minimize our problems, but an historian usually places issues in context.

Finally (but not least), he adds "The ethical foundation of the Canadian Forces ... dissolved under the weight of lies"; this characterization of testimony given at the inquiry by all military witness is an exaggeration. Dr. Granatstein paints with a broad brush; the inquiry commissioners did not go so far. Lying under oath is perjury; where is the evidence? What of defamatory libel?

On the whole, it seems the author has as much trouble dealing with Somalia as the Canadian military.

René J. Marin
Ottawa, Ontario

Joual antecedent

IN THE ACCOMPANYING LIST OF DATES to "Expressing Identity" by Maria Tippett [February/March 2000, p. 25], it is stated that in 1972 "Quebec writer Michel Tremblay publishes his play *Les Belles Soeurs*, bringing the Quebec street language *joual* to the stage for the first time."

However, this was not the first time *joual* had been on the stage. It was used in *Tit Coq* by Gratien Gelin, which had a big success in Montreal and later played in New York (where, I recall, it was not understood, although it was probably played in an English translation). I saw the play in Montreal just after World War II, probably 1946.

Elizabeth Dingman
Toronto, Ontario

Last word on first number

TO ALL THOSE GOOD FOLKS who still insist that the third millennium won't start until 2000: please, ask your mother where you were for the first 365 days of your life. Or whether she started calling you one year old the minute you were born. When you owe somebody 100 dollars, do you start at one dollar and just forget about the first ninety-nine cents? When you go to a dollar store, do you expect to get everything in the store for nothing? ...

John de Visser
Cobourg, Ontario

Youth wing

What happens when artistic imagination meets historical exploration? Well, a couple of things have crossed our imposing desk in our palatial office lately, each of them produced by or directed at the youth of this fair land, said (though never in these quarters)



electronic media if it doesn't violate Roger Ebert's copyright. The provincewide tour continues this fall. Study guides available from MTC, 174 Market Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0P8.

to be less steeped in Canadian history than their well-meaning elders would like them to be. First is the wittily titled *Blazing Paddles*, a collection of twelve short stories of historical fiction about British Columbia. Canadian historical fiction is enjoying a kind of buzz these days (viz. Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace*, Guy Vanderhaeghe's *The Englishman's Boy*, Wayne Johnston's *Colony of Unrequited Dreams*), but rarely is it written, edited, published, and marketed by high school students, in this case the students of Highland Secondary School in Comox, B.C. No mere mimeograph job, this 172-page book, with stories about the Nootka, Captain George Vancouver, and the latest shipload of Chinese immigrants among others, has an introduction written by no less than Pierre Berton, which proves there are no flies on these students when it comes to promotion. Want a copy? Try the *Blazing Paddles* website at <<http://sd71.bc.ca/highland/blazingpaddles>>.

Meanwhile, notice arrived that the Manitoba Theatre Centre had produced for high schools *The History of Manitoba from the Beginning of Time to the Present in 45 Minutes*, a length we thought might still test a teenager's attention span. Nonetheless, intrigued by the challenge of condensation (who doesn't like information in entertaining bite-sized nuggets?), we hopped into the *Beaver* limo and sped off to a local school to witness the production, which turned out to be jolly engaging and informative. Three actors, simple set, fast-paced: HBC, NWC, Selkirk, Louis, 1919, Depression, flood. Our verdict: Two thumbs up, and you may quote that liberally in print and

As the vine curls

When last we visited New France's Pierre Boucher and his prodigious (and often illustrious) progeny ["Noble Vine, Splendid Fruit," June/July 1999], we sped past the name "Montizambert" because we were focused on the accomplishments of such Boucher descendants as explorer La Vérendrye and philanthropist Marie-Marguerite d'Youville. But Frederick Montizambert (1843–1929), a Boucher descendant through his son Jacques Boucher de Montizambert (Boucher chose different surnames for his sons to reflect his French origins), is no also-ran in the famous-Boucher-offspring sweepstakes. Frederick Montizambert (that's *Dr.* Montizambert to you) had a career in public health that revolutionized the struggle against infectious diseases in the last two decades of the nineteenth century not only in Canada but in the United States and western Europe. As medical superintendent of the quarantine station at Grosse-Île in the St. Lawrence River near Quebec City, he applied the great scientific advances of Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch, advancing the notion of modern public health and saving countless lives in the process. For this, he has been named by the federal government a Person of National Historic Significance, joining 554 other Canadians so honoured. A plaque in his memory will be unveiled at Grosse-Île this summer. Now, what about the rest of us 29.99 million Canadians who are not Ps of NHS? We have our work cut out for us.



Website of the month

This is a fun site, in our humble opinion. If you'd like to see some of Canada's heritage sites, such as Old Fort William, Dawson City, L'Anse aux Meadows, or HMCS *Haida*, and can't afford the trip (or actually intended spending your vacation in Vanuatu), you can make a virtual visit through the History Lands website (www.historylands.com). In addition to the usual informative text and expandable images of the different sites and their attractions, there are numerous video clips that take you to such events as a battle reenactment at Quebec City, salmon canning at Steveston at the mouth of the Fraser River, or a native sun dance at Wanuskewin, near Saskatoon. All this plus kid-oriented activities including keeping a logbook, exploring the flora and fauna of the area, and recording finds in an archaeological dig. Hours o'fun.

Celebrating northern grit

It's difficult to believe that it took until 1942 before a ship managed—finally—to conquer the Northwest Passage. Men had been making the attempt in vain for four hundred years. Only twenty-seven years later, a man would land on the moon, for heaven's sake.

The ship that went where no ship had gone before was the *St. Roch*, a tiny wooden RCMP schooner that ventured from Vancouver harbour in 1940 and staggered into Halifax two years later after two winters locked in ice. In 1944, outfitted with a larger engine and deckhouse, it made the trip back to Vancouver via the Panama Canal, making it the first ship to circumnavigate the North American continent. This wartime mission to consolidate Canada's Arctic sovereignty guaranteed the *St. Roch* a place in the annals of history and, when the time came, a place in the Vancouver Maritime Museum and a declaration as a national historic site. Dry-docked, however, it has felt the feet of thousands of adults and children over the years and become susceptible to dry rot. Disaster looms, in short, and restoration is the imperative.

But restoration costs money. To that end, coming to the rescue, the RCMP will recreate the voyage of the *St. Roch*: it will leave Vancouver harbour this Canada Day, cross the Northwest Passage from west to east, travel down the east coast of North America, sail through the Panama Canal, and arrive in Vancouver six months later and (hopefully) some few million dollars richer as endowment-fund seed money. Of course, the original *St. Roch* won't be making the voyage. That honour goes to the *Nadon*, a high speed aluminum RCMP catamaran temporarily renamed *St. Roch II*, which will sail with a coast guard icebreaker. The salvation of the *St. Roch* will come, in part, through the sale along the way of 248,000 square inches at \$10 per square inch of an enormous Arctic landscape mural called *Isumataq*, which will become the backdrop for the restored ship.

Victoriana

We once had a garden in which you could grow crystals. Victoria, B.C. once had a crystal garden. Still does in fact, though for a time, in the 1970s, it was more of a garden with shattered (glass) crystals. That was when the City of Victoria decided to close the Crystal Garden, as the conservatory-like structure behind the Empress Hotel is formally and properly known, and allow what was once a jewel in the crown of Victoria's downtown attractions to fall into disrepair.

Those evil days are long gone – a rehabilitated Crystal Garden opened in 1980 – and this month the facility celebrates its seventy-fifth anniversary. During its glory days, from 1925 until the early 1960s, the Crystal Garden, which was designed by Francis Rattenbury (architect of the Empress Hotel and B.C.'s legislative buildings, and subject of a *Beaver* bio in the June/July 1999 issue), was the largest saltwater swimming pool in the British Commonwealth and the place for many of the city's social activities. The saltwater took its toll on the machinery and was replaced with fresh water, but as time went on the Crystal Garden lost its cynosure, and by the mid-1960s, when it was fashionable to disdain decorative turn-of-the-century architecture, it was closed in favour of a new and modern pool elsewhere in the city. However, as the Crystal Garden decayed, some heritage-minded citizens organized to restore it to its former glory. Successful, the Crystal Garden today is a tropical garden, an endangered species refuge, and, as in the past, a community centre. Happy anniversary, Crystal Garden.



Clock from the Besserer Street post office in Ottawa

Here I am, babe

Signed, Sealed, Delivered: I'm Yours.

No, that's not quite right. Sorry. We somehow found ourselves wrapped up in an old Stevie Wonder song (history of a sorts, maybe). Anyway, *Signed, Sealed, Delivered: Postal Heritage in Evolution* is the name of the exhibition that will open June 16 at the Canadian Postal Museum, which is housed in the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa. A *History of Snail Mail* might be another title (though not one they're using) because it takes us back to days of yore when people actually sat down to write a letter, put it in an envelope, stick a stamp on it, and faithfully deposit it in some designated red bin on the street, with the expectation that it would, in time, reach its destination. Which it usually did. The exhibit does look at e-mail, but the bulk of the display, at the museum until 2005, takes the visitor from the first Canadian stamp, the Three Pence Beaver (good name!), through period writing instruments, letters from sweethearts, a reconstructed rural post office, to the architecture of post offices. The display tactfully avoids a history of Canadian postal strikes, but that might be grist for a later exhibit.

Canada's Presbyterian Legacy

Sometimes it can't be easy to be a Presbyterian. Throughout the twentieth century, few religious figures have been typecast more consistently than the men and women who claim affiliation with the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Whether it's in the fiction of Margaret Laurence and Robertson Davies or in the latest of the Wingfield plays, *Wingfield Unbound*, Presbyterians are often portrayed as a dogmatic, dour, stingy, and diligent group of Calvinist killjoys who work too hard, are obsessed with sin, abhor all types of pleasure, and resist change at any costs. The stereotype is hardly appealing.

Like most caricatures, this picture is based on a selective reading of history. The Presbyterian Church in Canada celebrates its 125th anniversary this year, and while the church's legacy is much more complex than that suggested by a handful of clichés, Presbyterian actions and attitudes have sometimes been consistent with our popular caricatures. Over the past two hundred years, some leading Presbyterians strongly resisted various calls for theological and organizational innovation, maintained that their historic doctrines and creeds must be strictly adhered to at all costs, and on several occasions charged dissident clergy and seminary professors with heresy. Until 1875, when the Presbyterian Church in Canada was founded, Canadian Presbyterianism was divided into several branches, and many of its early leaders steadfastly refused to heed the call to compromise and unite. At the begin-

ning of the twentieth century, various congregations greeted innovations like stained glass windows and organ music into church with extreme suspicion because they violated the longstanding tradition of keeping worship plain, sparse, and simple. Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, a group of Presbyterian social reformers loudly condemned the practices of gambling, prostitution,

Within a century, Presbyterianism had spread across the dominion, its influence reaching far beyond its own Scottish-Canadian community.

drinking alcoholic beverages, and premarital sex, and actively lobbied the federal and provincial governments to make these practices illegal. Generations of zealous missionaries endeavored to convert Roman Catholics, First Nations communities, and assorted others to their brand of faith, and threatened that dire consequences would befall anyone who refused to follow their way. The Presbyterians also cooperated with the federal government in sponsoring a number of native residential schools that severely damaged many residents. The Presbyterian legacy in Canada, like that of virtually all groups, contains elements that are not always appealing to modern sensibilities.

However, over the last two hundred years, Canadian Presbyterians have also been at the forefront of many significant social and intellectual developments. In the late eighteenth century

Presbyterianism was brought to the Maritimes and Central Canada by several groups of Scottish settlers, and its familiar rituals, practices, and doctrines helped ease the transition of several generations of British immigrants to the New World. Within a century, Presbyterianism had spread across the dominion, its influence reaching far beyond its own Scottish-Canadian community. By stressing the virtues of becoming diligent, god-fearing, hard-working, and responsible citizens of Canada and the British Empire, the Presbyterian church helped foster these ideals in countless homes, workplaces, and communities. This was done through worship and Sunday school, but also through developments in areas of postsecondary education, social service work, politics, and literature. As such, Presbyterians became active supporters of the twentieth-century Social Gospel movement and its call for temperance and social justice.

Presbyterians placed great value on education. From the outset, the church believed that a highly educated clergy was vitally important to the future of both church and country. Therefore, it opened a number of colleges and schools throughout the nineteenth century so suitable young men could be educated and trained for the Christian ministry. As interest in postsecondary education grew, however, the church realized it also had an opportunity to reach out to a wider audience by providing basic education in the arts and sciences. Thus Presbyterianism was very influential in the development of institutions such as



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First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1875.

Dalhousie University in Halifax, Queen's University in Kingston, and the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. Clergy such as George Munro Grant of Queen's and Sir Robert Falconer of the University of Toronto led their respective institutions with distinction. The church also established a variety of educational institutions in various overseas countries, so that their citizens could also share in the perceived benefits of western education.

The health and welfare of needy Canadians was also addressed by the Presbyterian church. In the days before governments delivered social services, the local kirk became an important source of charity. To meet the need for basic medical services in various isolated communities, the church established a number of hospitals and nursing stations, and often recruited the required nurses and doctors from its own ranks. In addition, a network of social service homes was established to care for the aged, reform wayward teenagers, provide sanctuary for pregnant unmarried women, and help immigrants settle into their adopted home. However, by the early years of the twentieth century, many Presbyterian reformers believed these services could best be provided by the Canadian state, and so encouraged federal, provincial, and municipal governments to assume this work.

A variety of influential Presbyterian lay people also helped shape Canada's cultural and political landscape, spreading Presbyterian values through

their respective fields. Politicians such as Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, Ontario premier Oliver Mowat, and Cairine Wilson, Canada's first woman senator, were active church members. Toronto *Globe* editors George Brown and James A. Macdonald used their newspaper to share their ideals with the wider community. Literary figures such as Ralph Connor (Reverend Charles W. Gordon) and Lucy Maud Montgomery also

gave their many readers a window into the ethos of their cultural community. While the church became a comfortable home for many social and political conservatives, a large number of those Presbyterians who became most active in public life were reformers intent on changing some aspect of the social and political status quo.

In these ways, Presbyterianism has left an important legacy in Canada throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, over the last seventy-five years, the church's impact in Canada has waned significantly. Its future prospects appear uncertain.

Part of the challenge relates to the continuing impact of church union. In 1925, about two-thirds of Canadian Presbyterians (1.4 million) united with their Methodist and Congregationalist cousins to form the United Church of Canada. Although 700,000 Presbyterians refused to join, the church lost almost all its teachers and academics, many of its charitable and educational institutions, and most of its overseas facilities. This exodus of people and money severely truncated the church's work through the 1940s and made the tasks of training new clergy, raising money, and developing relevant programs extremely challenging. Moreover, the rise of the United Church gave Presbyterianism's traditional Scottish constituency another religious option. While the denomination began to develop ethnic congregations of Chinese, Hungarians, Koreans, Swiss, and French, these communities have

struggled to grow and survive. Furthermore, the church's presence in Quebec and Western Canada has been greatly diminished, and its base is now limited to the Maritimes and Ontario.

Secondly, the Presbyterian church, like other mainline Protestant denominations across North America, is now competing with the various Evangelical churches that are rising in Canada's suburbs, while in older neighbourhoods, where Presbyterian churches are found in larger number, local residents are largely absent. That, and the fact that its traditions have little appeal for baby boomers, means the Presbyterian church (along with other mainline denominations) is being supplanted by the Evangelical blend of traditional morality, contemporary music, and upbeat programming. With fewer young families joining, increasing numbers of aging Presbyterian congregations worry about how long they can survive. The task isn't easy.

Finally, like many other churches, the Presbyterians are struggling to adapt to an increasingly secular world. A fundamental shift in social attitudes and assumptions has pushed the church to the margins of society, and the message of traditional Presbyterian theology is hard to reconcile with the values of our modern, materialistic, and consumer-driven age. Calls to love God and neighbour, treat others with dignity and respect, accept a fair share of social responsibility, and care for family and country no longer resonate with Canadians as they once did. Furthermore, a culture that applauds newness and innovation has little appreciation for a church that places a high priority on continuity and tradition. The Presbyterian church seems increasingly out of step with the modern world.

Throughout our history, the contribution of Presbyterianism to Canadian life and culture has been significant. However, as society continues to evolve and change, chances are good that being a Presbyterian will be even more difficult in the future. Inaccurate stereotypes will be the least of the church's problems. ■

Ian Manson holds a Th.D. in the history of Christianity from Victoria University in Toronto, and is currently minister at Immanuel United Church in Winnipeg.

A Daring Young Man in His Fly

Long-distance flying was dangerous in 1919, but Canadian bomber pilot Harry Yates loved a challenge. The British Foreign Office plucked him from among hundreds of young pilots seasoned by the Great War to take on a very hush-hush mission: To fly a very important passenger to Cairo from London, and to do so in record-breaking time. ➤ But when Harry returned to London, he found the Empire's regard for a colonial flyboy's feat was scant indeed.

On June 20, 1919, twenty-two-year-old Flight Lieutenant Harry Yates strode into London's Savoy Hotel to celebrate his recent London-Paris multiengine flight record. Shortly after, his crap game was interrupted by an RAF courier's knock at the door. Three hours later, he flew his hastily prepared "Bloody Paralyzer" Handley Page (HP) bomber to Lympne near the coastline, and after just two hours sleep, at first light on June 21, he met a British Foreign Office agent. Minutes later the wind was in their goggles on a secret and hazardous five-thousand-kilometre flight to Cairo.

The young Canadian was a superbly experienced RAF pilot who had flown thirty-one types of British, French, American, and German aircraft, had logged over four hundred hours on bombers alone, and was the second pilot chosen to fly a HP off the assembly line. He had been hand-picked at the end of the Great War to ferry Paris Peace Conference delegates, British ministers, and royalty between London and Paris in converted bombers with Pullman-type cabins of rosewood and mahogany for twelve VIP passengers.

During the night of June 26, Yates dropped out of his crippled HP onto a hot Cairo airfield with his Canadian copilot Jimmy "Buzz" Vance, two airmen, Harry St. John Phil-

by of the Foreign Office, and Lawrence of Arabia. They had shattered the fifteen-and-a-half-day London-Cairo flying record by ten and a half days. Flying time was thirty-six hours and would have been less if promised British ground support en route had been supplied.

Yates's mission was to deliver Philby, father of infamous British double agent Kim Philby, to Cairo. He was to quell mounting insurrections by some Arab factions upset by Britain's reneging at the peace conference on promises of support made during the British-Arab joint military campaigns against the Turks. Along the way, Yates picked up an injured Lawrence of Arabia at Suda Bay, Crete. Lawrence had left the peace conference for Cairo in April, ostensibly to collect his notebooks to write *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, an account of his wartime experiences. His bomber had crashed near Rome, killing both pilot and copilot. He survived with a broken collarbone and damaged ribs, convalesced for a time in a Roman hospital, and had made it as far as Crete when Yates's aircraft settled onto an airfield inside the crater of an extinct volcano.

Long-distance flying in 1919 was dangerous. In April that year, fifty-one bombers left England for the Middle East to



ng Machine

The Handley Page bomber at Cairo airport.

reinforce British foreign policy. Six months later, fifteen had crashed or were written off due to damage. Only twenty-six arrived. The remaining ten were scattered across the continent, unfit to fly. Eleven airmen had been killed in the effort and many, including Lawrence, were wounded in the attempt. The Foreign Office had considered rushing Philby to Egypt by motor torpedo boat, but decided air was faster even if the risk was higher.

No.1 Communications Squadron was tasked, and young, intrepid Yates was selected.



Harry Alexander Yates was born August 1, 1896, in London, Ontario—seven years before the Wright brothers' historic flight. His family moved to Toronto when his father, a journalist, joined the *Toronto Globe*, and then to Ottawa when his father joined the civil service, eventually to become private secretary to Prime Minister Robert Borden.

Young Harry displayed a strong interest in how things worked. As a teenager he bought a motorcycle, stripped down the motor, and rebuilt it. He also built and operated a ham radio and learned telegraphy as a high school cadet. His father, who had no mechanical interest, enticed Harry to maintain the family's big black Chalmers auto. It paid off. In the early years of flying, knowing the mechanics of flight

and motors gave one a clear advantage when trouble arose, as it so often did.

At Ottawa Collegiate Institute, "Steamboat" Yates stood six feet, one inch, and weighed 170 pounds. A 1916 volunteer, he was commissioned in the Canadian Army Service Corps. Upon hearing he was to be posted to a transport supply depot, he jumped to the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) to be a fighter pilot and wrote "Whoopee!" in his diary when accepted as a probationary flying officer. In January 1917, he sailed from Halifax with a troop convoy and arrived at Liverpool on February 6.

RNAS trainees took a short ground course at London's famous Crystal Palace and then progressed to six weeks of basic flying training. Top ground course candidates were posted to Vendôme, southwest of Paris, for basic flight training, the rest to various English airdromes. Yates, a very competitive young man, wanted Vendôme badly. And he got it. He was one of ten selected from sixty-five.

At Vendôme, his rapid progress continued. After a Lewis machine-gun test, he wrote, "I came first by a big margin. Wonders never cease." Truth is, he had bribed an armament shop chief petty officer with two tins of tobacco to teach him after hours how to strip and assemble the gun. His biggest thrill came when his dual-flight instructor was on leave. The replacement instructor ordered him into the rear pilot's seat, rather than the customary student seat up front. They flew six circuits with Yates at the controls. He was then asked if he was ready. Solo. Every student's biggest desire and worst fear. He wrote his father, "I flew solo after two hours and seven minutes of dual ... which is the record around here. ... I felt so proud." Yates's instructor had confused him with another H. Yates who had many more dual-flight training hours. Audacious Harry took every advantage.

In the early years of flight, aircraft were very primitive and crash landings and fatalities were common. But Yates had a natural talent for flying. On only his second flight after solo, his motor conked out at 450 metres. He landed in a field without accident or damage. A few days later he lost his way and was forced to land at nightfall in a field 130 kilometres away. Again, no damage. Two weeks after solo, at 600 metres in a Buffalo Curtiss, he became violently ill. He instinctively shut off power and nose-dived to the ground, reaching 190 kilometres per hour, then levelled out just in time to land abruptly. The moment his wheels hit the field he "coughed up everything [he] had eaten for a long time." He had ptomaine poisoning, which, in a curious fashion, would one day lead to his Cairo flight.

Hospitalized for two weeks, he complained to his dad, "It makes me mad because I have only a little over two hours of flying time [left to qualify for his wings] ... and could have ... been the first [of his group] to get back to England."

Out of hospital, he continued training in France. Other trainees, he wrote, had crashed up to five machines each and broken axles and other structures in many forced landings, while he, in his seven forced landings, "hadn't broken, bent or damaged a single thing." His commander rated him VGI—very good indeed.

In England for phase two, Yates continued to impress until his stomach worsened. Sent to Chatham Royal Naval

Hospital for eight weeks and fed rectally, he struggled with frustration. "In 10 days ... I would have been fully qualified as I have flown everything they set before me and have not broken a single wire." He had been recommended to fly "scouts"—a top pilot rating. Years later, he spoke of the surgery that removed half his stomach. The doctor gave him about six months to live and told him he would be prohibited, due to his physical condition, from ever flying again.

Yates was determined, however. Through his father's intervention via Prime Minister Borden, the no-flying decision was overturned, with the restriction that he fly only bombers. That decision and his subsequent extensive bomber flying experience during World War I led to his selection for the elite No. 1 Communications Squadron and in turn his Savoy Hotel recall for the secret Cairo flight.

After being hastily driven back to his base near London

Yates asked Philby, "Would you object, sir, if we went for the record?"

from the Savoy on June 20, Yates was briefed. His mission: to deliver, in secret and as quickly as possible, a Middle East expert to Cairo to quell mounting Middle East insurrections. A brand new HP 0/400, Britain's largest WWI bomber, stood by. Ground support would be provided en route.

Yates ordered the new Rolls Royce engines replaced with two from an HP he had flown frequently and whose motors he knew by touch. He asked Lieutenant Jimmy Vance, the other Canadian on base, to be copilot, and selected RAF air-men mechanics Steadman and Hand for motors and rigging. Essential equipment was drawn: a map, three spare tail skids (tail wheels were not used at the time), three spare tires, one water bottle per man, blankets and groundsheet for sleeping under the plane, and 1,860 litres of petrol. They carried no food or weapons. Leather coats and helmets with goggles were issued for crossing mountainous weather in open cockpits.

Three hours later they were at Lympne airbase near Folkestone to pick up Philby and head to Paris, but inclement weather interfered with departure. At first light the next morning, Yates asked Philby, "Would you object, sir, if we went for the record?" Philby replied, "The sooner we get to Cairo, the better."

Yates had two good reasons to covet the record. First, he had trained the current record-holder, RAF Major A.S.C. Maclaren, who had made the first flight of twenty-one days and later cut it to fifteen and a half. (The tight-lipped British never told Yates why he was ordered to train this older pilot to fly the giant HP. No doubt he would have felt he could have made that flight himself.) Second, he felt he was living on borrowed time because his doctor had given him six months to live.

Whatever the motivation, Yates climbed into an overcast sky and light rain on June 21, only a few days after the London hoopla and international celebration of Alcock and Brown's famous flight from Newfoundland to Ireland—the first nonstop transatlantic flight. Unlike that highly publicized event, there were no spectators or breathless reporters

waving at Yates. His flight was for political advantage, not mythmaking.

Lympne—Paris (Buc Airport) 1 hr 50 minutes

The first leg was incident free. Air Ministry ground staff refuelled and replaced the starboard fuel pump while the crew grabbed breakfast.

Paris—Lyons (Fort Brun Airport) 3 hrs 40 minutes

At Lyons, promised Air Ministry ground support failed to show. The crew filled their gas tanks with the help of some loaned Chinese labour. Yates was not happy with this loss of time because the crew had other maintenance tasks to perform. Mechanical fitness was critical for long-distance flight, especially for a record attempt. After refuelling they headed to Marseilles for lunch.

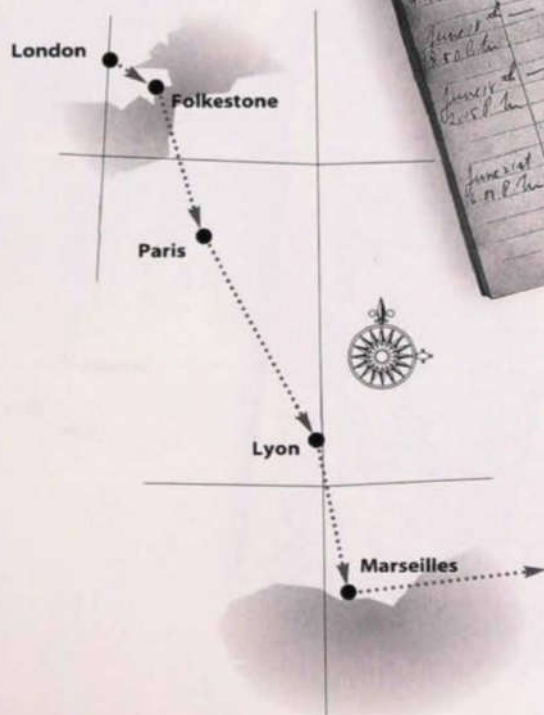
Sub-Lieutenant Harry Yates. Despite his early enthusiasm for being a fighter pilot, Yates found that flying for England as a "colonial," he and his fellows were treated differently than their English counterparts, sometimes insulted, often passed over for promotion. Although Yates held progressive "acting ranks" of flight commander, squadron commander, and flight group commander, he remained a lieutenant. By December 1918 he wrote home, "In the next war there is one service I certainly will not be with and that's the RAF."



Philby replied, "The sooner we get to Cairo, the better."

Lyons—Marseilles (Istres Airport) 1 hr 35 minutes

The flight was uneventful, but Yates found the rudimentary landing field covered with large boulders. He picked his way as best he could but still blew two of four tires. Vance wrote of the field condition in his flight report, "Very bad, indeed." Then, during a short lunch break, their map was stolen. With no directional beams, radar, or radio in 1919, maps were essential. Improvising, they borrowed a local encyclopedia and traced maps of southern Europe and the north coast of Africa.



The image shows a close-up of a handwritten flying logbook. The logbook is divided into columns for Date and Month, Pilot, Machine Type and No., Passengers, Time, and Height. The entries are for flights in December 1918, with destinations including London, Paris, and Cairo. The handwriting is in ink on a lined paper. The logbook is titled 'Yates's flying log, December 1918 - September 1919' at the bottom.

Date and Month	Pilot	Machine Type and No.	Passengers	Time	Height	Course	Remarks
Dec 14 th 10.50 hrs	—	N.P. 5789	—	1.70	3000	London - Paris	Col. Lawrence & Lt. Bond at 10 (Wien)
Dec 15 th —	—	N.P. 5789	—	—	—	Local flying	—
Dec 15 th —	—	N.P. 5789	—	—	—	Paris - London	German military Attache, French Canteen, etc. See in R. Stude Maitland
Dec 15 th —	—	N.P. 5789	—	—	—	London - Paris	—
Dec 15 th —	—	N.P. 5789	—	—	—	Paris - London	Argentine military Attache & Argentine Air - War. Minister Pacemaker Mrs. Phillips Lt. J. R. L.
Dec 15 th —	—	N.P. 5789	—	—	—	Cairo	—
Dec 15 th —	—	N.P. 5789	—	—	—	London	—
Dec 15 th —	—	N.P. 5789	—	—	—	Lyons - Paris	—
Dec 15 th —	—	N.P. 5789	—	—	—	Forward	550 hrs 32 min

Yates's flying log,
December 1918 - September 1919

seems slyly pleased
members of the v

Yates's flying log,
December 1918–September 1919.

This period was spent largely flying Paris Peace Conference delegates, British ministers, and royalty between London and Paris. Despite his growing disenchantment with the British military establishment in this period, Yates, as the entries in his log book suggest, remains delighted with flying and the challenges it presents. Reaching 6,500 metres altitude one day, he writes: "My highest yet. Gee, it was cold." He congratulates himself on some of his daring, calling it a "little foolishness";

seems slyly pleased that he made four members of the visiting Royal Japanese Naval Delegation air sick ("and got ticked off for same"); remarks that a member of the Argentinean delegation tries to get out of the plane in midair; and notes after a "joy flight" that a certain Miss Orrick threw her arms around his neck every time he stalled. "PS," he adds, "I stalled 5 times."

Yates brought the lumbering HP onto the narrow riverbed with

Marseilles—San Guiliano (Pisa Airport)

3 hrs 50 minutes

They made it easily high above cloud cover to Pisa; however, upon descent through clouds, they couldn't find the airport. Yates recalled being told it was near the Leaning Tower so they headed for that landmark. It worked. After landing, they searched unsuccessfully for ground support. The engines needed an overhaul. Yates ordered an overnight stop and they worked through the night. Philby, the only one to rest, drew Yates's acerbic comment, "Philby was not one to get his hands dirty." At first light they put the last of the forty-eight spark plugs back and woke up their somnolent VIP.

Pisa—Rome (Centocelle Airport) 2 hrs 55 minutes

On a cold and wet morning, they climbed through rain and clouds into the clear Mediterranean blue sky. Along the way, they were awed by Mount Vesuvius belching smoke three hundred metres above the cloud cover underneath their plane. Nosing down to land they found cloud had also fallen almost to ground level. Yates had to take the lumbering giant very carefully to near road-top level to find their airfield.

Date and Hour	Pilot	Machine Type and No.	Passenger	Time	Height	Course	Remarks
June 22nd	N.P.	S.P.	None	2.20	5,000	Paris-Lyon.	No British representation so had to fill machine ourselves.
June 22nd	N.P.	S.P.	None	9.5	7,000	Lyon-Marseilles	Had to land on Centocelle 3 hrs. 50 min. Had to fill ourselves.
June 22nd	N.P.	S.P.	None	2.50	8,100	Marseilles-Pisa	Also had to fill our own machine here.
June 22nd	N.P.	S.P.	None	1.25	8,100	Pisa-Rome	Had to refuel ourselves as usual.
June 22nd	N.P.	S.P.	None	2.50	8,100	Rome-Sarranto	Passed over a mountain range 5,500 ft high. Forward.

Marseilles

Pisa

Rome

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Taranto

Athens

Aigion

Suda Bay

Sollum



ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD

Harry St. John Bridger Philby (1885–1960) was an officer in the Foreign Office charged in June 1919 with subduing Arab unrest hostile to British interests in the Middle East. An accomplished Arabist, he eventually converted to Islam and became a political advisor to the king of Saudi Arabia. His role in helping establish the modern Middle East, however, was overshadowed by his fellow passenger in Yates's plane, the more glamorous T.E. Lawrence. Philby's reputation was also diminished by the infamy of his son, Kim, who served for fifty years as a Soviet secret agent.

Date and Hour	Pilot	Machine Type and No.	Passenger	Time	Height	Course	Remarks
June 24th	N.P.	S.P.	None	1.50	5,000	Sarranto-Aigion	Had a forced landing in river bed due to failure of petrol pump. Delayed 4 hrs. Travelling by hand pump all the way.
June 24th	N.P.	S.P.	None	1.70	5,000	Aigion-Athens	
June 25th	N.P.	S.P.	None	1.45	4,000	Athens-Suda Bay	Port propeller after in air. We crashed into Suda Bay with about 600 ft of spare.
June 26th	N.P.	S.P.	None	2.35	6,000	Suda Bay-Sollum	Four hours out of sight of land & lost a dark ship in sight. Decidedly causing delay. Not my idea of a good time. 5.55 hrs 22 min Forward

amazing skill, his only damage a broken tail-skid and punctured tire.

Once again, promised ground support was missing. It took three hours for a truck to deliver petrol cans, which they discovered later were stored in a building only ninety metres away. They refuelled by hand.

Rome—Taranto (via Naples) 3 hrs 50 minutes

Yates headed across Italy's boot, over mountains to Taranto. Although their altimeter fluctuated between two thousand metres and twenty-five hundred metres, they frequently found themselves barely off the ground when out of cloud cover. Sudden appearances of mountain walls and peaks was a shock for Canadians used to flying in northern Europe and England. Yates called it, "the roughest trip I have had yet." As he had logged enough flying miles to circle the globe twice, that was an understatement. The airfield, which resembled many other barren fields in the area, was not found until they descended low enough to see the airport windsock on their horizon.

Scholar, soldier, and author, T.E. Lawrence, known as Lawrence of Arabia, was one of the great military heroes of the First World War. He helped lead an Arab revolt against the Ottoman Turks, who had dominated the Middle East for five hundred years, thus contributing to the Allied war effort. In April 1919, while attending the Paris Peace Conference as a member of the British delegation and learning the RAF intended sending fifty-one Handley-Page bombers to Egypt, he asked permission to hitch a ride to Cairo to

collect his papers and reports for a memoir he planned to write of the Arab revolt, which would become *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. The plane he was in struck a tree near Rome, killing two, but leaving Lawrence with only an injured collarbone. Within ten days, he was well enough to fly, and arrived in Crete with another flight of HP bombers, where he encountered Harry Yates.

The latter was thrilled to have the legendary hero as his passenger.



Once again they serviced the plane themselves. By now they had written off hope of Air Ministry help. Their anger was somewhat diffused, however, because they had begun to overtake grounded bombers from the group of fifty-one that had left England for Cairo in April—two months before.

Taranto—Athens (Dekheilia Airport) 5 hrs 50 minutes

The following morning, Yates pushed on across the heel of Italy toward the Greek coast and then snaked down the coastline for direction, heading for Suda Bay on the island of Crete. Vance described the Greek area as "completely devoid of possible landing sites." Their choices were only open water or cliffs and rocky coast. Without warning a fuel pump quit. Fuel could no longer get to the forward tank. Yates quickly turned left for Athens, which he calculated to be closer by an hour's flying time. It was not close enough. Finally, seeing only fifteen minutes of fuel left in the forward tank, he anxiously searched for a field. All he could find was a partially dry but rocky riverbed on the south side of the Bay of Corinth, eight kilometres east of Aigion. It wasn't much, but it had to do. He aimed between two fissures where the river flowed and carefully eased down. It was so dangerous that Yates and Vance solemnly shook hands as they went in. Philby, captive in the rear, could do nothing but hang on and curse or pray.

Yates brought the lumbering HP onto the narrow riverbed at eighty kilometres per hour with amazing skill, his only damage a broken tail-skid and punctured tire. A relieved crew jumped out quickly to make repairs. Fuel was transferred to the front tank. Then the plane was taxied to place the flat tire over a ground crater, allowing crew to work underneath. Excited local inhabitants, who had very likely never seen an aircraft, flocked about. Yates asked some of them to push up the tail of the six-ton bomber allowing mechanics underneath to replace the tail-skid. Others were set to clearing a wide pathway of boulders for take off. They cheerfully joined in and added food and drink to the bargain. Six hours later they had finished.

Although the landing was difficult, the takeoff was certainly going to be tougher. Yates stood up and peered out over the cockpit windscreen at about forty-five metres of gravel and rock in front of the plane. After that was only water. He revved the motors and leaned back in his boots. Away they went in a roar of dust and debris that scattered their local helpers. Their four big wheels struck water, but slowly the plane rose above it. Looking back down in relief, they returned waves to an astonished coastal community. At Athens, for a change, they were provided with ground service. A relief for the tiring crew.

Athens to Suda Bay, Crete 3 hrs 15 minutes

Yates taxied down the Athens airfield and was airborne only a few minutes when a motor failed. He turned back suspecting water or dirt in the fuel line. All fuel had to be removed, strained through a chamois, and returned. Yates recorded a ten-hour delay to siphon the 1,100 kilograms of fuel into cans and back into the tanks. It was no way to set a long-distance flying record.

Later, as they approached Suda Bay, the HP began to

shimmy so much as to be worrisome. Suspecting a cracked propeller, Yates knew he had to be very careful on a difficult approach—the landing strip was inside an extinct volcano. Both pilot and aircraft were now dead beat. Attempting to come in tight over the crater's lip, he misjudged his height. The wingtip magnesium flares used for night landings clipped weeds off the crest. A close call—he could have torn off a wing.

On the dirt field, Yates confirmed his guess. The propeller was finished. A new one was essential or the record attempt was over. He spotted a stranded RAF bomber on the field and struck up conversation with the pilot, who he discovered was awaiting a new propeller from England. Pleading the case of his VIP passenger, Yates got a good propeller from the stranded aircraft. Meanwhile, Philby, who had wandered about rather than assisting the crew, found Colonel T.E. Lawrence near a second stranded bomber, waiting to hitch a flight to Cairo. He offered Lawrence a lift. If the two Canadians ever needed a stimulus to keep them from fatigue, they had it now in the back cockpit beside Philby. Lawrence, one of the most famous heroes of World War I, was a living legend.

Suda Bay to Sollum, Libya 3 hrs 55 minutes

Immediately after takeoff, Yates banked around the inside of the crater twice to get enough speed up to go over the top. He described it as "riding a motorcycle around the inside of a barrel." Hardly out of the crater, a carburetor acted up. He had to land and take off twice more before they had it adjusted properly. It cost him another four hours.

Then, a few minutes later, as they headed for Libya across the blue-green Mediterranean, the fuel pump failed. It was time for a crucial decision: land again and await help for a new pump, like the other bombers strewn across Europe, or hand-pump petrol 450 kilometres across the Mediterranean. They were no lifeboats or life jackets on board. There were no air-sea rescue units to aid them. With Lawrence in the rear and the sea out front Yates chose audacity. "Hand-pump the petrol," he ordered Steadman and Hand.

Knowing the worn engines could no longer climb the mountains without overheating, he hugged Crete's coastline. Once around the end of the island he took a compass bearing across the sea, allowing for a thirty-two-kilometres-per-hour wind drift. An Air Ministry flying boat, sent to Suda Bay to accompany them to Libya, veered about six hundred metres off Yates's course. Its pilot, according to Yates, "flew with a monkey on his shoulder." He tried to wave Yates over to his bearing, but Yates, convinced they had misread their compass, thumbed his nose and stuck to his own course. The flying boat disappeared in the distance. Yates said it became lost and wasn't found until two and a half days later. In the meantime, heading south, Yates and Vance took hourly shifts at the controls, while the sweating airmen took hourly shifts cranking the hand pump. On his rest time, Yates wrote in his log, "Four hours out of sight of land, decidedly not my idea of a good time."

By noon they saw the sand beaches of Libya and once over the beach spotted Sollum airbase directly ahead. With

Before them was an unmarked and uncompromising desert spotted

no inboard radio, Lawrence wrote a note and cranked it up the wire strung through the fuselage for such purposes. "Most excellent. You have had no drift at all. Back tank half down. T.E.L." Yates proudly stuffed the prized note in his jacket pocket and landed safely. Ground temperature was fifty-five degrees Celsius.

He checked his deteriorating HP. The engines were badly worn, the craft was out of alignment, the elevators were terribly frayed, and the rudder controls were so shaky they could only be used sparingly. And they still had one more leg of over six hundred kilometres to go. Refuelling would take about four hours. The crew's energy had been sapped by constant need to service the plane. The HP needed an overhaul, but that would delay flight until well into the night. Would their compass suffice for a night flight over barren desert darkness? Should they wait for the next day, play it safe, and risk giving up a better record?

Before them was an unmarked and uncompromising desert spotted with armed rebels. A forced landing would mean certain death. Steadman and Hand had hardly slept and ate rations during flight to save time for ground maintenance. Could they continue to hand pump petrol? Would the stifling heat do them in?

Yates boldly chose Cairo.

Sollum—Cairo (Heliopolis Airport) 5 hrs 20 minutes

About 3:00 p.m., after refuelling, they mounted up in shimmering heat. Yates still could not get the plane above six hundred metres without the engines overheating. Air speed showed a slow 110 kilometres per hour (maximum was 157 kilometres per hour). Below them they could see armed bands roving the desert. Dripping with sweat, the airmen pumped on endlessly. Yates and Vance peered into the horizon as afternoon turned to early evening, wondering if in the coming darkness they would find the airport.

With relief, far ahead they saw a glimmer of light on the black desert and eventually droned over the city. However, once there, they couldn't find the airport. They circled for forty minutes, six heads peering over the edge of the fuselage. Yates remarked how he watched in astonishment as Lawrence climbed onto the wing and with a better sightline below than the rest of the crew, pointed out the airfield to Yates. They had been blinded by circus lights near the airport and could not spot the landing lights. Yates settled his tattered HP down safely. Steadman and Hand took their calloused hands off the fuel hand pump. They had done it.

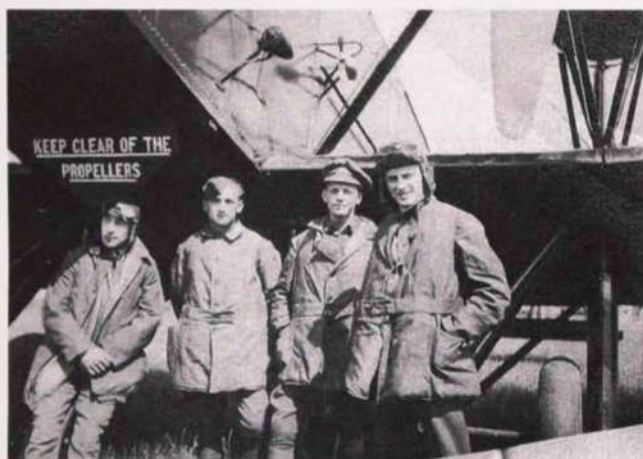
➤➤➤➤➤ Their new record was five thousand kilometres in thirty-six hours flying time over five days, two lost because of a lack of promised Air Ministry support. Complimented by General Allenby, commander of British Middle East forces, and recommended for the Air Force Cross by Brigadier-General Salmon, the crew felt justifiably proud. Due to the political sensitivity of their mission, they were not allowed to talk with reporters about their flight. After a rest and sightseeing, Yates and Vance headed back. From

with armed rebels. A forced landing would mean certain death.

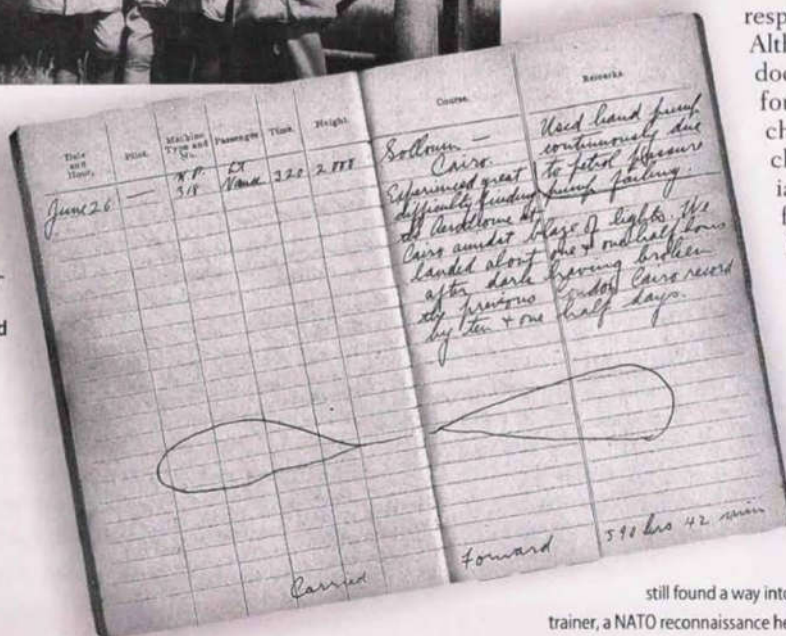
Cairo, they sailed to Alexandria, volunteering to stoke coal because of a crewman's strike, then took a train to Paris, and finally flew to London, arriving at their base unheralded at 5:30 in the morning.

There was no public recognition or decoration awaiting them. Yates's squadron commander, misinformed, had posted notice that the crew had died in a crash at Marseilles. The *Daily Mail* carried the story. David Garnett, who later edited *The Letters of T.E. Lawrence*, repeated the error in his 1938 book. And Philby, in his book *Arabian Days*, misnamed Yates, calling him Grey.

British military historian Liddell Hart reported that Lawrence returned to Paris to write his famous book in "great bursts which lasted as long as twenty-four hours, with only a single break for food." Philby became governor of Mesopotamia and his son became notorious as a British/Soviet double agent in the 1960s. Yates's record stood for seven years before being broken by England's Kingsford Smith, who later set the England-Australia record and was knighted for his contribution to flying.



Yates (above, at left) and crew at Cairo airport after shattering the fifteen-and-a-half-day London-Cairo flying record by ten and a half days.



Yates and Vance sailed home in the fall of 1919 without official recognition for their Cairo flight. They were quite finished with flying for the United Kingdom. They had eagerly volunteered and sought to support the Imperial cause with exemplary and daring flying service. But in doing so, their eyes were sadly opened to the treatment of "colonial" servicemen by some British military and government officials.

Yates's father, however, was not pleased with the RAF treatment of Canadian volunteers, his son in particular. He knew that many British airmen had been decorated for service far less hazardous than his son's and had been promoted ahead of him. He also knew that his son had been ordered, without being told why, to train a much senior RAF officer, Major A.S.C. Maclaren, to fly the HP for the first Cairo record attempt. And he knew that Maclaren had earned the AFC and bar for his first record of twenty-one days, later cut to fifteen and a half days. He felt his son deserved a decoration for slashing Maclaren's record by two-thirds, and perhaps more, as the Foreign Office mission was urgent and secret and carried out with minimal Air Ministry ground support.

With Borden's support, he took the case through the Canadian high commissioner in London, Sir George Perley. Testy letters were exchanged. On January 1, 1920, Borden wrote, "The enclosed letter [of Yates senior] leads to the unfortunate feeling, which prevails among Canadians who served in the Imperial Air Force. I have personal knowledge that this feeling is ... intense. While its memory remains, it would be most undesirable, in case of another war, to permit Canadians to serve in any Air Force other than one organized, controlled and directed by Canadians."

A year and a half after Yates senior pled the case, the two pilots were presented with the Air Force Cross: Vance in Toronto by Ontario's lieutenant governor and Yates in Ottawa by the governor general.

In the ensuing years, Yates's stomach responded poorly to medical treatment. Although he outlived by far his military doctor's prognosis of six months he found no remedy until he turned to chiropractic. Indebted, he became a chiropractor. Nevertheless, as a civilian pilot, he remained dedicated to flying the rest of his life, even when his private pilot's licence expired in 1951. On Monday, April 1, 1968, Harry Alexander Yates, AFC, while flying to the Warbirds Association fiftieth anniversary reunion in Vancouver, suffered a coronary attack between Toronto and Winnipeg. He died shortly after in a Winnipeg hospital. ■

Guy Simser is a writer living in Kanata, Ontario.

Though he failed an RCAF pilot's eye test in 1953, he still found a way into cockpits of a WWI Tiger-Moth biplane, a WWII Cornell trainer, a NATO reconnaissance helicopter and Cessna artillery spotter, and a Boeing 747.



Arthur's Secret

Presidents of the United States must be born on U.S. soil. So says the American Constitution.

But evidence suggests that Chester Arthur, the twenty-first president, was born in a foreign land. Canada, perhaps?

Shh, don't tell the Americans.

by Pat MacAdam

Chester Alan Arthur, twenty-first president of the United States, was an accidental president.

He was also an accidental vice president.

Chester Arthur may also have been a Canadian citizen and, therefore, ineligible to hold the offices of president and vice president.

He happened to be in the right place at the right time when Republican bosses were feverishly scrambling for a compromise running mate for James A. Garfield of Ohio. The 1880 Republican national convention was hopelessly deadlocked by feuding factions. One faction sought a third term for Ulysses S. Grant, but its efforts were in vain. After thirty-six ballots the delegates turned to a dark horse—James Garfield.

Party bosses then turned to selecting a vice-presidential running mate to round off the ticket. Needing to appease the defeated faction, they offered second place on the ticket to New York delegate Levi P. Morton, but he allowed the cup to pass from his lips. The offer was then made to Chester Arthur, and he accepted. Arthur had never sought nor run for public office in his life. He was the consummate backroom politician who, early on, caught the eye of the big-city political bosses. But the Garfield-Arthur ticket went on to defeat Democrats Winfield Scott Hancock and William H. English in the 1880 election (though by fewer than ten thousand votes) and Chester Arthur found himself vice president of the United States.

James Garfield's presidency lasted only 199 days. On July 2, 1881, he was wounded by an assassin's bullet in Washington. He died ten weeks later from septic poisoning with the bullet still lodged in his body.

Chester Arthur was sworn in as president of the United States the day Garfield died—September 19, 1881. He was probably not qualified under the U.S.

Circumstance, not design, brought Chester Alan Arthur to the presidency of the United States. He had been vice president for only a few months when an assassin's bullet critically wounded President James A. Garfield in the summer of 1881. In September, with Garfield's death, he automatically became president. Yet even before his vice-presidential nomination, questions were being raised about his citizenship. Arthur claimed his birthplace at Fairfield, Vermont, but other sources suggest he was born in Lower Canada.

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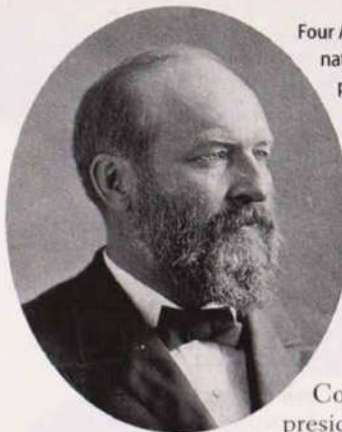
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Four American presidents have been assassinated. James Abram Garfield, twentieth president of the United States, was the second. He was a compromise candidate at the 1880 Republican national convention, and narrowly won the 1880 election. On July 2, 1881, he was shot in a Washington railway station by Charles J. Guiteau, a jobless man who had been rebuffed in his appeals to the president for a patronage appointment.

Constitution to serve as either president or vice president. Article

II of the Constitution stipulates: "No Person except a natural born Citizen, or a Citizen of the United States ... shall be eligible to the Office of President." Article XIII of the Amendments to the Constitution states: "But no person constitutionally ineligible to the office of President shall be eligible to that of Vice-President of the United States."

It appears Chester Alan Arthur did not meet the Constitution's statutory requirements.

Chester Arthur was most likely a citizen of Lower Canada, a British subject, born in Dunham Flats, Quebec, near the Vermont border. His father, William, was born in 1796 in Ballymena, County Antrim, in what is now Northern Ireland, where the MacArthurs, as they were originally called, immigrated from Scotland. Arthur's grandfather, Gavin MacArthur, changed the family name to Arthur to set himself and his heirs apart from the Catholic MacArthurs. Chester Arthur's father was named after the Protestant King William of Orange.

In 1818, at age twenty-two, William Arthur left Ireland forever and sailed from Derry to Trois-Rivières, Quebec, in search of a better life. From Trois-Rivières he moved to Upper Mills (now known as Stanbridge), and then to Dunham Flats, where he obtained a teaching position.

There is no record that Arthur's father ever attempted to become a United States citizen, even though his dual jobs as a teacher and itinerant preacher took him back and forth across the border from Quebec to Vermont and New York. Arthur's mother, Malvina Stone, a descendant of English settlers in New Hampshire, was a British subject living in Dunham Flats.

William Arthur and Malvina Stone eloped. They ran away to East Berkshire, Vermont, and were married by a Methodist clergyman. On April 12, 1821, they renewed their marriage vows in the Episcopal Church of All Saints in Dunham Flats.

In 1823, the Arthurs set up housekeeping in Burlington, Vermont, and the next half-dozen years are a blur of moves to new pastoral duties (William had become a Baptist) and teaching positions. In addition to Burlington, Dunham Flats, and Stanbridge in Quebec, the Arthurs also lived in Jericho, Richford, Waterville, and North Fairfield, Vermont. Given the sheer number of residences they had, it is difficult to pin down who of their six children was born where.

Even the official arm of the U.S. government—the U.S. Information Service—is unclear as to the details of Chester Arthur's birth. The USIS office in the embassy in Ottawa responded to my query with the answer: "You'll note that they (*The Presidency from A to Z* published by Congressional Quarterly) indicate President Arthur was born on October 5, 1830. Two other sources indicate that the actual year of birth was 1829." One of those two sources, though unnamed by the USIS office, alleged that Chester Arthur changed the year of his birth "out of vanity" alone, but this seems highly unlikely.

A son—likely William Chester Alan Arthur—was born in his grandparents' house in Dunham Flats in Lower Canada in 1829, though there is no record of his birth in present-day Dunham, Quebec. (Records of the period were destroyed in a fire.) The next year a second son—likely Chester Abell Arthur—was born in North Fairfield, Vermont, but he died in infancy. Again, no official record exists of the death, though relatives later attested the child's body was sold to a medical school as a cadaver for dissection.

In my search for evidence regarding Arthur's birth, the office of the secretary of state in Vermont's capital, Montpelier, responded: "There is no record in this office showing the births and deaths of the children of William Arthur and Malvina Arthur from Jan. 1, 1822, to Jan. 1, 1841." Similarly, the town clerk in Fairfield wrote: [I] do not find recorded, therein, between the years A.D. 1825 and A.D. 1835, the birth of any child named Chester A. Arthur."

Could the future U.S. president have appropriated his brother's birthplace so he could claim U.S. citizenship?

An in-law of the Stone family wrote later: "C.A. Arthur was born in Canada. I am strongly of the opinion that the son Chester Abell Arthur died in Burlington. [I will swear that the] present Arthur assumed the name of his dead brother. There is no doubt that the son who died in Burlington is the one said to be born at Fairfield."

An elderly aunt of Arthur's said he was "born on British soil" and "there is no doubt that the son who died at Burlington is the one said to be born at Fairfield." Lindal Corey, a surveyor and longtime Dunham Flats resident, swore before he died that William and Malvina Arthur had a son born in Dunham Flats before they began their gypsy-like treks through Vermont and New York. Chester Arthur attended Union College in Schenectady, New York, but the college kept no record of birthplaces.

Even *Burke's Presidential Families of the United States of America* reports that Chester Arthur "was probably born in Canada."

But well before his advance in politics, Arthur was claiming American citizenship. On being called to the New York bar, he swore before William A. Dusenberry, commissioner of deeds, that he was "a native-born citizen of the United States ... of the age of twenty-one years, and a resident of the First Judicial District of the Supreme Court of the State of New York."

Nonetheless, Arthur's pedigree was challenged in 1880 when he accepted the vice-presidential nomination. Repub-

Could the future U.S. president have appropriated his brother's birthplace so he could claim U.S. citizenship?

lican bosses insisted he provide proof of birthplace and citizenship. At first, he was unable to name his birthplace, but party leaders insisted he name a place before he wrote his acceptance letter.

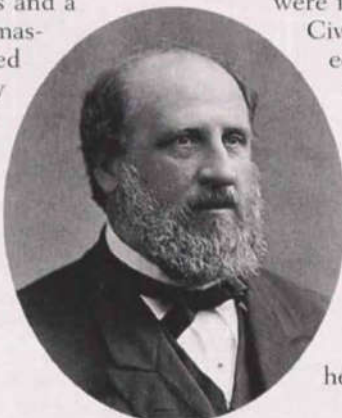
Chester Arthur told his associates he was "going fishing" and would return with the requested letter. He did not go fishing. Instead, he went to Montreal with a friend to search records to see if any existed showing he was born in Canada. Finding none, he deemed it safe to name some out-of-the-way place in the U.S. He chose North Fairfield where his deceased infant brother had been born and, thus, made it appear he was a native-born U.S. citizen.

★ ★ ★

Americans like to place their presidents—especially dead ones—high on pedestals. But there is little doubt in some quarters that Chester Arthur was a venal person capable of committing any duplicitous deed to achieve his political ends.

He was a creature of machine politics and a protégé of the notorious backroom puppet master William Marcy "Boss" Tweed. He moved up through Republican patronage ranks very swiftly once he had caught Tweed's eye. As

William Marcy Tweed (right), known as "Boss" Tweed, was a powerful force in New York City politics in the middle of the nineteenth century. Through various machinations he and his cohorts managed to seize control of the city treasury and plunder it of millions. After an exposé in the *New York Times*, he was tried and convicted on charges of forgery and larceny, and sent to prison in 1873.



Cartoon, from *Puck* magazine, April 13, 1881.

Arthur's beginnings in politics were in New York, where in 1871 he was appointed collector of customs for the port of New York, a place conspicuous for flagrant abuses of the spoils system. He was eventually removed as collector following an investigation into corruption, and his reputation remained tainted by his involvement in machine politics. Some people feared that as vice president (the period of this cartoon), Arthur would have a pernicious influence on government. As president, however, he undertook reforms that removed patronage from the civil service.



THIS IS NOT THE NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE, IT'S THE PATRONAGE EXCHANGE, CALLED U. S. SENATE.

a New York state senator, Tweed created through legislation a totally unnecessary and redundant legal opening that paid Chester Arthur \$10,000 a year in 1869 as counsel to the commissioners of the board of taxes and assessments.

In 1871 Arthur was appointed by President Ulysses S. Grant to one of the most coveted offices in all of government—collector of the port of New York. He supervised more than one thousand officials who collected about two-thirds of the nation's revenue from tariffs, and enjoyed an annual salary of \$40,000 a year.

Arthur was fired by President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1878 as a symbolic gesture in the president's campaign against the spoils system. Despite this, Arthur left office with \$3 million saved from his salary over a seven-year span.

As president, however, he surprised his detractors and confounded his ward-heeling Republican backers. He turned out to be a reformer, which burned his bridges with backroom kingmakers. He vigorously pursued prosecutions of post-office scandals in which several party supporters were implicated. In 1883 he signed the Pendleton

Civil Service Reform Act, which all but eliminated patronage appointments and replaced them with civil service exams for most federal jobs.

He also attempted to reduce tariffs, cut the federal debt, and modernize the U.S. navy.

He looked every inch the aristocratic father figure Americans looked for in their chief executives, too. He was seen as a Victorian grandee—always in a Prince Albert coat, ascot tie, a fresh flower in his buttonhole, and a silk handkerchief in his vest pocket.

But in the end, the Republican supporters he alienated with his reforms got even. He lost his bid for renomination in 1884, and the Republicans lost the White House to Grover Cleveland, the first Democrat to be elected president since before the Civil War. Cleveland, 250 pounds, handsome, beer drinking, cigar smoking, a hunter and fisherman, won the 1884 election by only 29,704 votes out of the almost ten million cast.

Chester Arthur, the "Gentleman Boss," returned to New York and resumed his law practice. He kept secret the fact he had long suffered from Bright's disease, or nephritis—a life-threatening kidney ailment. He died in New York City on November 18, 1886. At the time of his death, he was looked upon as the most effective U.S. president since Lincoln. Not bad for a Canadian, eh? Or, as Americans might say: not bad for a Canadian, huh? ■

Patrick MacAdam is an Ottawa-based writer.

When the Huron and the French began to encounter one another in the first half of the seventeenth century, each noted many differences. Whereas Huron society was egalitarian, the French system of government was hierarchical, and life was often brutal for those restricted to the lower echelons; while the French dealt with criminal behaviour by imprisoning or executing the offending party, the Huron gave gifts to the victim's family to atone for the deed or went to war to avenge it; and, when the French added wild onions to their soup, the Huron professed as much disgust as the French did when the Huron ate green corn that had purposely been left to rot. Many French considered the Huron to be unsophisticated "savages" in desperate need of Christian tutoring and Euro-

TEN MEANS DEATH

by Joyce Wright

Number symbolism was a powerful force among the French in the seventeenth century. Oddly enough, it was a powerful force among the Huron, too. But when French and Huron met one another, they found that the numbers each thought so imbued with universal mystic power weren't so universal after all.

pean mores. However, the Huron likewise considered the French to be grossly uncivilized. From their perspective, the French habits of gesticulating wildly during speech, interrupting each other, and haggling over prices while trading were simply uncouth. In addition, the difficulty many of the French experienced in learning the Huron language was viewed as evidence of their stupidity, an observation that was speculated to be connected in some way to their "abnormal" excess body hair.

When the early European explorers and missionaries travelled to the Huron homeland south of Georgian Bay,

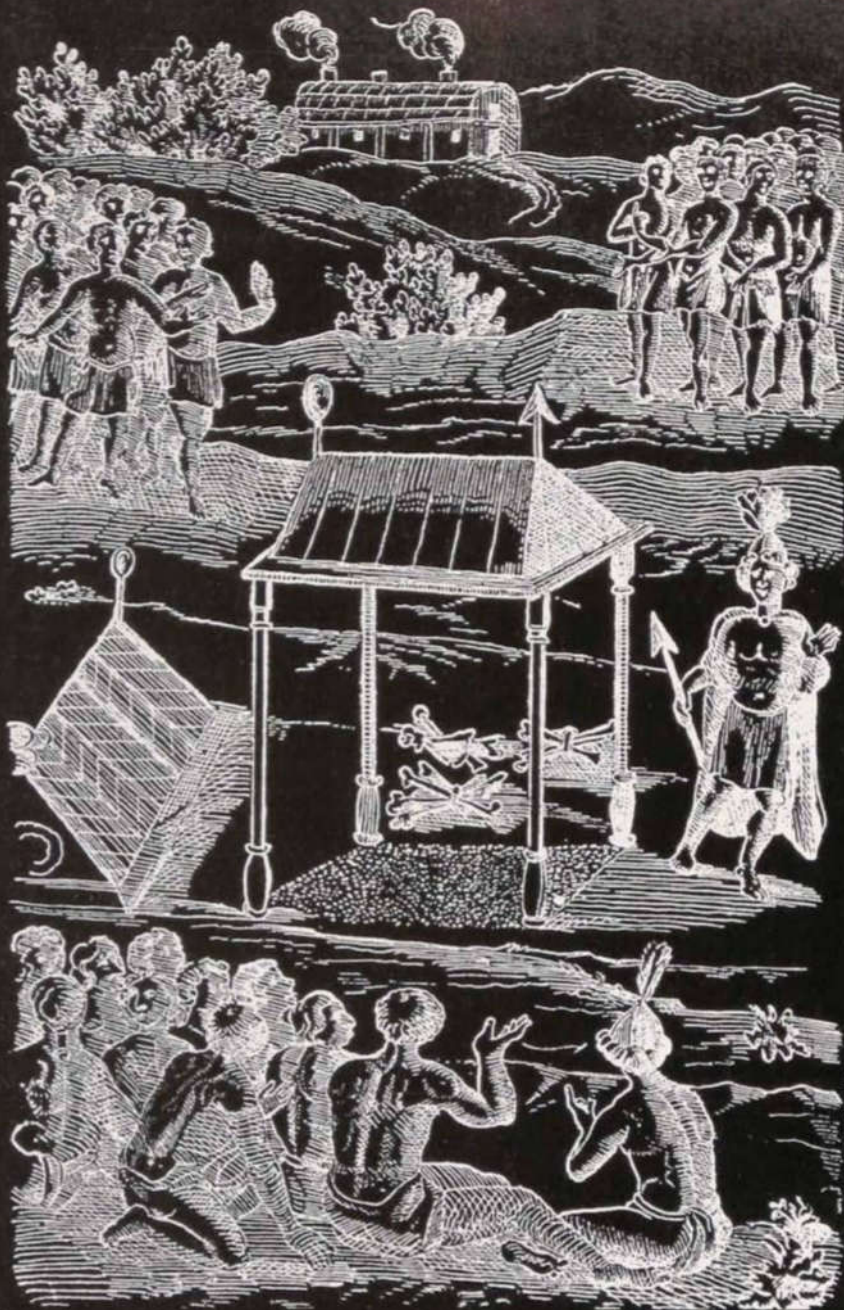
they found some thirty thousand individuals living in villages of often more than a thousand people each. Agriculturalists, businessmen, and savvy politicians, the Huron maintained extensive trade networks, gambled, warred, created fine art, and believed in a pantheon of supernatural beings. One of the remarkable things that the Huron and their French visitors had in common was a belief in the active significance of number symbols. For the French, and indeed for all of those of European ancestry, number symbols were an accepted part of daily life. Today we retain such expressions as "good things come in threes" and "cats have nine lives," but most of us have essentially lost the faith that these and other numbers play an active role in our lives. This was not true of the seventeenth-century Europeans. Nor was the belief in number symbols limited to what we would today call pseudoscience, such as astrology and alchemy. Johannes Kepler, who is considered to be the father of physical astronomy, believed that there was an intrinsic association between numbers and the cosmos; the inventor of logarithms, John Napier, tried to use numbers to interpret the Bible; and Leibnitz, who with Sir Isaac Newton has been described as one of the two most important thinkers of the seventeenth century, suggested that the binary code of zeros and ones was preferable to the decimal system because 1 represented God and 0 reflected the void from which all was created. Number symbols literally imbued all aspects of life, and it is probable that had the French Jesuit missionaries and other visitors to Huronia not themselves come from a culture in which numbers played such a prominent role, we would not today have recourse to such an extensive written record of early seventeenth-century Huron number symbolism.

But while it is true that the Europeans and the Huron shared a belief in the cosmological utility of number symbols, it cannot be said that they always shared precisely the same ideas concerning the meaning of individual numbers. For example, Europeans considered the number 10 to be "perfect" because it was the sum of the first four numbers (1+2+3+4), and when the meanings of each of these numbers were considered, they represented the totality of human experience: 1 was symbolic of existence and, to



The Feast of the Dead, as illustrated in this 1870 engraving (right), was a national ceremony in which the dead of each Huron village were removed from temporary graves and brought to a common ossuary – a deep pit lined with beaver robes – for mass burial.

View of the Huron (below) through the eyes of Gabriel Sagard, a Récollet priest, from the frontispiece of his *Le grand voyage du pays de Huron*, 1632.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / C-131804



NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / C-131804

1
2
3
4

1010101010101010

Christians, God; 2 was symbolic of polarity, such as good and evil; 3 was symbolic of the spiritual such as the Holy Trinity; and 4 was symbolic of matter. It is not surprising then that Christians believed that ten commandments governed their lives. The importance of the number 10, however, preceded the arrival of Christianity in Europe. The ancient Greek Pythagoreans were so utterly convinced of the perfection inherent in the number 10 they claimed that there were ten heavenly bodies. And when observation failed to identify the tenth body, they resorted to the simple expedient of inventing it. They named it *antichthon*, the "counterearth."

To the Huron, in contrast, the number 10 represented death. When a person died, there was an official ten-day mourning period for that person's spouse, which coincided with the ten days that it was believed it took the deceased person's spirit to travel to the afterworld called the Village of Souls. Not everyone made the journey to the Village of Souls, but those who did, as in Greek mythology, were thought to be required to cross a river guarded by a dog. At the Feast of the Dead, where all of those who had died since the preceding feast were gathered up from the cemeteries* and buried in a large communal pit, the bodies on at least one occasion were laid on a blanket of fur robes, each of which was constructed from ten beaver pelts. The celebration itself was an elaborate affair sometimes attended by thousands of guests from surrounding villages who engaged each other in competitions of skill for prizes, exchanged gifts, feasted, and prepared the bodies and the burial pit for the final interment of the dead at sunrise on the tenth and final day of the festival. Despite some discrepancies in the historical literature, it is also likely that the Feast of the Dead was celebrated every ten years.

In Europe, as in Huronia, the number 2 was associated with genesis.

* The Huron treatment of the dead was quite different from the European, but no less respectful. When a person died, his or her body was initially left upon a platform in the cemetery to decompose until the next Feast of the Dead, when it was buried.



Where the number 1 represented existence and, ultimately, God, 2 came to reflect the splitting apart of the "wholeness" that Europeans assumed was an inherent quality of divinity. This was believed to be a necessary step in the act of creation because earthly existence was perceived to be a function of such opposites as day and night, birth and death, and man and woman. It was, nevertheless, lamented because it meant that the purity and the goodness of the number 1 was now tainted by evil. It also suggested the presence of a seemingly insurmountable division between heaven and earth and God and mankind. As a result, European and, specifically, Christian symbolism surrounding the number 2 was generally negative.

The Huron meaning of the number 2 did not have such negative connotations. In fact, a belief in such antithetical concepts as "good" and "evil" was generally atypical of Huron cosmology. Instead, they tended to sense a continuum in all things: death was not so much a cessation of life as a transformation to a new state of existence and, as the supernatural and the natural interacted on a daily basis in a myriad of ways, there cannot be said to have been much of a division between the two. The ironic exception to this occurred within the Huron cosmogony, where twin brothers with opposing personalities were considered to be responsible for creating all that exists on the earth. Iouskeha, the good brother, created humanity and most of the plants and animals, while his evil twin, Tawiscaron, created everything that is harmful to humans and constantly interfered in his brother's endeavours. A nineteenth-century version of the twins' story suggests that their respective roles were pre-saged by the manner of their birth: Iouskeha was born in the normal manner, but his brother Tawiscaron chose to be born from his mother's armpit, thus killing her. The twins' grandmother, Aataentsic, placed her daughter's body in the doorway of the house and announced that she would live again after the passage of ten days. Tawiscaron, however, pre-

Jean de Brébeuf was the scion of a noble Norman family who, as a Jesuit priest, did missionary work among the Huron in the early seventeenth century. In 1649, he was captured, tortured, and burned at the stake by the Iroquois. He was canonized in 1930.

Huron Christians praying.



Le Pays des Hurons was the name given by the French in the early seventeenth century to the territory south of Georgian Bay occupied by the Huron, a confederacy of five Iroquoian-speaking tribes. "Huron," which means "ruffian" or "boar's head," was the name the French gave them in reference to the hairstyle of the Huron men. The Huron called themselves Wendat, believed to mean "people of the island." Chiefly an agricultural people, the Huron were experienced traders, and after contact with Samuel de Champlain in 1609, concluded a trading and military alliance with the French. Numbering around thirty thousand at contact, the Huron population was reduced by a series of epidemic diseases to about nine thousand by 1640. In 1649, the Iroquois, the traditional enemies of the Huron, defeated and dispersed them.

vented this from occurring by killing his mother for a second time by putting an arrow through her and cutting off her head. Some of the stories say that she was later reincarnated by Iouskeha—in her third life—as the moon.

At a somewhat less exalted level, the Huron also used the number 2 in ceremonial situations. Most often this meant that there were two masters of ceremonies at feasts and other public events. However, in one ceremony, it was two young girls of about five or six years of age who were the most significant part of the festivities. Each year around mid-March they were symbolically "married" to their village's fishing nets. To the Huron everything—humans, animals, and even inanimate objects—was believed to be sentient and, therefore, susceptible to both flattery and insult. As a consequence, ritualistic diplomacy was considered to be an essential element of human survival. In the case of fish, this meant that the nets were politely asked for their assistance; they were never left near the dead as it was known that fish do not like the dead; and the bones of the fish themselves were never thrown into the fire because the souls of the dead fish might inform the living fish of the insult, and the living fish, in turn, would refuse to be caught.

Sometimes, the meaning a culture attributes to a number is a direct reflection of the nature of that number. The number 3, as described in the sixteenth-century poem *La Semaine* by Du Bartas, is a good example:

*The eldest of odd, God's number properly ...
Heaven's dearest number, whose inclosed center
Doth equally from both extremes extend,
The first that hath a beginning, a midst, and an end*

Both the Huron and the Europeans believed that the number 3 connoted balance. However, whereas the Europeans generally incorporated this number into spiritual contexts such as the Holy Trinity, the Huron applied it to all aspects of human life where balance needed to be restored or maintained. For example, in Huron society,

dreams were believed to be mere precursors to reality, so when a Huron man dreamt that he was captured and tortured by the traditional enemies of the Huron, the League of the Iroquois, his community emulated the essence of the dream in a controlled setting so the predicted reality would be averted. This meant that he ran through a number of fires and around a longhouse three times while his friends ritually burned him with firebrands to mimic the torture that he had endured in his dream. Eventually, he was allowed an opening by which to "escape," and a dog was offered as a sacrifice in place of his own life.

A few scholars have suggested that the Huron adopted the use of the number 3 after meeting Europeans and being introduced to the Holy Trinity. However, archaeological evidence predating the arrival of Europeans indicates that the Huron and their ancestors, at least as far back as the fourteenth century and probably earlier, favoured the number for their own reasons. It is important to recognize that when the Huron encountered Europeans, they reacted much as any other society would. They believed that their own way of life was superior and, as a result, accepted only what suited them and ignored the rest. The French did the same thing when they accepted the superior utility of canoes and snowshoes but stopped short of adopting other Huron practices. It is no surprise then that the Jesuit missionaries' efforts to convert the Huron to Christianity were not very successful. It's unlikely that more than 3 percent of the population accepted Christianity prior to 1649 when, already devastated by European-introduced diseases, the Huron were all but destroyed by the League of the Iroquois. Of those who did, many did so for access to guns and other privileges associated with a close relationship with the Jesuits.

Illness also required the restoration of balance and justified the frequent use of the number 3. In fact, the Huron believed that there were three general types of diseases: those which resulted from natural causes, those which reflected an unconscious desire on the part of the sick person, and

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those which were the result of witchcraft. Treatment of the first type of illness or injury included the use of local plants. All medical treatments, moreover, entailed a significant spiritual aspect. Among other things, the medicine man had to ensure that three criteria were met before he attempted a cure: the sky was clear, the dogs would not howl, and he could treat the person in some place apart from the general populace.

The historical records also indicate that efforts to heal an ill person could variously include a three-day feast, a dance lasting three hours, or a gift of three fish. In one particular instance described by the Récollet Gabriel Sagard, an ill woman was brought to the third and final day of a dance and led through three stages: in the first stage, she was carried; in the second, with help, she was able to walk and even dance a little; and, in the third, she danced alone. In this manner, the dance itself functioned as a metaphor for her cure. As the Jesuit missionary Jean de Brébeuf observed several years later, "Metaphor is largely in use among these Peoples; unless you accustom yourself to it, you will understand nothing."

The Huron ascribed almost identical meanings to the numbers 6 and 9 as they did for 3, but at correspondingly higher levels. Nine, in particular, as the sum of $3+3+3$, was often applied to situations in which restoring balance to the lives of a large number of people was necessary. As Brébeuf observed, it was not possible to offend any one particular Huron without also offending everyone from his village. As a result, the crime of murder always held the potential to lead to war—not between families, but between whole communities. To forestall this required the reestablishment of balance through the presentation of gifts to the victim's community and family. Specifically, two categories of gifts were given. The only information available about the second category is that the gifts were hung from a pole and suspended above the head of the murderer; however, the first category consisted of nine gifts, although the word *gift* is a misnomer. In fact, it was common for between thirty and sixty objects to exchange hands (or even as many as one hundred as in the case of the murder of the Jesuits' twenty-two-year-old servant Jacques Douart). Instead, *gift* referred to the underlying metaphor associated with the presentation of discrete groups of objects. In the case of murder, these were as follows: the first gift represented the removal of the murder weapon from the wound and prevented those who sought revenge from picking it up; the second wiped away the blood of the crime; the third restored peace to the land; the fourth placed a figurative stone upon the rift in the earth caused by the murder, thus sealing it; the fifth ensured peace between the villages and security for those moving between them; the sixth was an offering of tobacco to the relatives of the victim (aside from its spiritual qualities, tobacco was believed to have a calming effect); the seventh



soothed their minds; the eighth was a drink offered to the victim's mother as a means of healing her "illness" of grief; and the ninth provided for her a mat upon which to rest while she mourned her loss.

As with the number 3, European notions regarding the number 5 arose from observations concerning the nature of the number itself. In the portion of the sixteenth-century poem *Hero and Leander* written by George Chapman, the properties of the number 5 are described as follows:

*Since an even number you may disunite
In two parts equal, nought in middle left
To reunite each part from other left;
And five they hold in most especial prize,
Since 'tis the first odd number that doth rise
From the two foremost numbers' unity,
That odd and even are: which are two and three,
For one no number is, but thence doth flow
The powerful race of number*

Since the Pythagoreans had already decided that odd and even numbers respectively represented men and women, it followed that the number 5, the sum of the first odd and the first even number (ignoring 1, since it was not perceived to be a real number), represented the union of men and women and, therefore, love. The poem continues:

*The odd disparent number they did choose,
To show the union married loves should use,
Since in two equal parts it will not sever,
But the midst holds one to rejoin it ever*



The Huron likewise were aware of the existence of odd and even numbers and, like the Pythagoreans and those who followed them, they found odd numbers to be preferable to even numbers. (The Greeks associated odd numbers with the limited, men, and all things light and good, and even numbers with the unlimited, female, and all things crooked and dark.) Many of the European visitors to Huronia witnessed, and attempted to describe, a game that they saw the Huron play called the Game of Straws. Although none of these observers were ever able to understand the rules or the goal of the game entirely, they did discern that odd numbers scored higher than even numbers.

But, whereas the Europeans felt that the union of the first odd and the first even number reflected human love, the Huron saw it as an appropriate intermediary between the natural and the supernatural worlds.

Most spirits in the Huron pantheon were considered to be open to entreaties from humans and such communication was facilitated through the use of tobacco, sweat baths, dog feasts—and the number 5. All of these, with the possible exception of tobacco, were used when a Huron woman baptized Marie became ill. In an attempt to restore her to health, her parents first implored the Jesuits to give her a red

cap since, they said, the loss of the hat had made her ill. When the Jesuits refused to conform to what they considered a superstition, a dog feast was held. The woman seemed to recover some of her strength as the dog's life ebbed, but when she succumbed again, a medicine man was called in. In trying to determine the nature of the woman's illness, he spent some time in the sweat lodge. When he emerged he stated that witchcraft caused the woman's illness and that there were five charms in her body, each of which corresponded to five spirits. The woman died a few days later.

While everyone was thought to hold a certain amount of personal power or *orenda* suitable for making offerings and entreaties to spirits for luck in battle, for protection of one's home and family, or to encourage the season's crops to grow well, certain individuals were acknowledged as being particularly adept in communicating with the spirit world. Such men and women were sometimes given the respectful title of *Oki*. It was a Huron *Oki* named Pigarouich, for instance, who told the Jesuit missionary Le Jeune that, in order to become a medicine man, he had fasted for five days and nights alone in the woods.

For the Europeans, the number 4 reflected matter and physical order and, as such, it was often used to classify the mundane aspects of the world. For instance, during the seventeenth century, the earth was believed to be comprised of four elements (fire, air, earth, and water), existence consisted of four planes (physical, mental, astral, and buddhic), and health was a function of a balance of four humours (black bile, yellow bile, phlegm, and blood). One suggested reason for this use of the number 4 is derived from its 3+1 aspect, where 3 represents the spiritual and 1 symbolizes God, with the result that the 3 and the 1 added together equal God's created works.

For the Huron, however, the number 4 was an entirely social number. Four types of feasts were commonly celebrated: the Feast of Farewells, the Feast of Thanksgiving, the Feast for Singing and Eating, and the Feast for Deliverance from Illness. Embassies, whether intended to find out what was required to heal one of their own people or to offer aid to a neighbouring nation, generally consisted of four individuals. Samuel de Champlain was once presented with four wampum belts as tokens of friendship and hospitality while, on another occasion, he was escorted by four Huron guides. Once, when meeting to trade with the French, the Huron offered four gifts representing words. For the Huron, a word had a metaphorical meaning, and the man who presented a word without a gift was considered to have "no voice." Jean de Brébeuf eloquently described these "words" in a report that he sent to his superiors:

The first ... was but a salute and an honor that they paid to Monsieur the Governor, and to all our French. The second, a request that the warehouses be opened for trade. The third, a prayer that the price of the goods be reduced. The fourth and the fifth were in thanksgiving for the trouble taken in going to teach them in their country amid so

many dangers, and through so many enemies who threaten but fire and flames. They gave two presents for that purpose, because, they said, that was of much greater importance than anything else on earth.

The surviving Huron presented the remaining Jesuits with precisely ten necklaces of porcelain beads ... considered the ultimate in wealth in their society.

Even on fishing trips away from the village, it was customary for the four chief men to sleep in the four corners of the lodge. The Récollet Gabriel Sagard participated in one of these excursions and was offered such a corner in which to sleep. Although obviously intended as an honour, as only the most respected of men were granted such pride of place, sleeping furthest from the fire in chilly weather was the least comfortable. Sagard politely declined the invitation, no doubt to the puzzlement of his hosts.

When Europeans and the Huron met, so too did their number symbols. With the origins of their order and their constitution based in number symbolism, the Jesuits were no strangers to the significance of numbers. But, while some of the Jesuits did attempt to impose their notions of number meaning on the Huron, other Europeans recognized their need, as visitors in Huronia, to conform to at least some small degree to the dominant culture. Charles Montmagny, Samuel de Champlain's successor as governor of New France, learned this lesson well. On September 20, 1644, there was a final meeting of the Huron, Algonquin, League of the Iroquois, and the French at Trois Rivières to attempt to arrange a peace. As usual, the presentation of gifts formed the core of the proceedings. When all the gifts of the League of the Iroquois had been presented with due ceremony, Monsieur the Chevalier de Montmagny divided them into three portions "in accordance with the usages of these peoples."

Unfortunately, the peace did not last, and by 1649 the League of the Iroquois had managed to all but destroy the Huron as a distinct society. The survivors were forced to find shelter among the villages of their allies, some of whom also eventually fell to the league. War and the massive epidemics of European-introduced diseases led to the abandonment of at least fifteen villages and the destruction of the Jesuit mission, Saint Marie. Among those to die in the war with the Huron was the Jesuit missionary Jean de Brébeuf. The surviving Huron, who fondly referred to Brébeuf as *Echon* or *Echom*, presented the remaining Jesuits with precisely ten necklaces of porcelain beads, such items being considered the ultimate in wealth in their society. Despite the attempts of the Europeans to impose their religion on the Huron, the epidemics that had annihilated two-thirds of their population, and the destruction of their homes and way of life by the League of the Iroquois—all of which were succeeded by a terrible famine—the number symbolism of the Huron, as evidenced by their gift of respect for the dead missionary, remained intact. ■

Joyce Wright is a research associate at the Canadian Museum of Civilization with an interest in the cultural symbolism of the Iroquois. Her book *Numbers: A Message from the Past* is available from the London Museum of Archaeology, an affiliate of the University of Western Ontario.

by Philip Jensen

A Passage from India

In April 1914, 376 East Indians boarded the *Komagata Maru*, a ship bound for British Columbia, resolved to challenge Canadian laws that excluded nonwhite citizens of the British Empire. When they arrived in Vancouver a month later, they were met—no surprise—by Canadian authorities as determined to keep them out of the country as the Indians were determined to get in. A lengthy standoff ensued, firing Indian nationalist sentiment back on the subcontinent, but doing little to soften Canadian immigration law.



The point man for the Canadian authorities was Vancouver immigration agent Malcolm Reid (in uniform). He owed his appointment to Conservative member of parliament H.H. Stevens (third from right) who opposed Indian immigration. Here, the two of them meet the press aboard the tug *Sea Lion* in Vancouver harbour, July 18, 1914.

Gurdit Singh stirred and stood up. It was late afternoon and they'd been waiting on the hard ground for hours. He glanced briefly around at his companions, then crossed the railway tracks to the road. The others got up too now, confused and uncertain. A few were dissuaded by the policemen present, but the rest, 250 of them, followed Singh as he began walking down the road towards Calcutta. At each step angry little puffs of dust rose from beneath their feet. It was the fall of 1914, and the monsoon was over.

Just four months earlier, on May 21, their ship, the *Komagata Maru*, had cruised into Vancouver harbour on Canada's West Coast. The 376 people aboard, all British subjects, were forced to remain on the ship for two months, denied adequate water and food, threatened with gunboats, and subjected to gratuitous abuse. Still they refused to leave, determined to claim a right freely given white citizens of the British Empire.

In 1914 approximately two thousand East Indians were resident in Canada, most of them Sikhs from the north of India. They were nearly all in British Columbia, labouring at insecure jobs in exchange for wages too low to attract the white working man. Even so, their presence was noted and resented. In a Victoria newspaper of the era we read, "They are a case more apart even than the Chinese. Their habits of life are unsatisfactory. They do not bring their wives with them, and will not make homes and rear families. They are totally unfitted for a white man's country. ... For the Sikh in his home we have every respect; for the Sikh in Canada there is no proper place, and it is a great unkindness to a well-meaning people to bring him here."

Dissatisfaction of another kind festered within the international Indian community. After centuries of British rule a mood for independence was growing, and a status quo that failed to deliver equal rights lent strength to the movement. By the first decade of the twentieth century secret



revolutionary groups had spread to Indian communities around the world. And as the revolutionary movement flourished, an intelligence network had grown to monitor its activities.

On the west coast of North America the intelligence network was represented by William Hopkinson, a police inspector on leave from the Calcutta police force. Several governments were concerned about the revolutionary groups, and Hopkinson reported to authorities in Canada, Britain, India, and the U.S. In British Columbia, he was under the direct supervision of the Vancouver immigration agent, Malcolm Reid.

Reid's position was a political appointment owed to H.H. Stevens, a Conservative member of parliament. Stevens's views on East Indians, common at the time, are clearly expressed in the December 15, 1913 edition of *The Sun*. "I challenge any man living to bring out a single instance in the whole history of the Indian nation to show that their civilization has done anything at all to uplift the other races of the world," he said. "I say their civilization is unproductive of good to the human race as a whole."

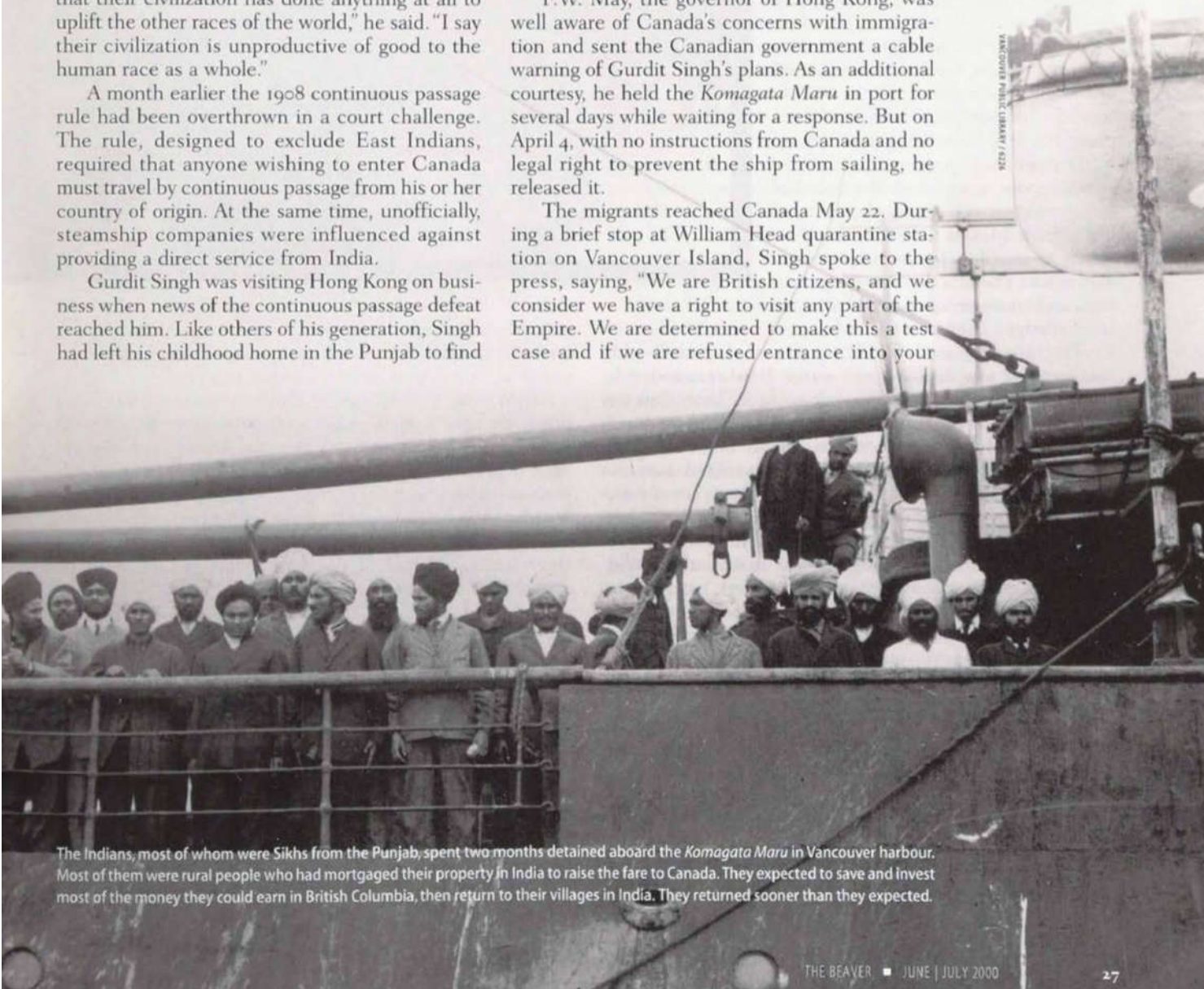
A month earlier the 1908 continuous passage rule had been overthrown in a court challenge. The rule, designed to exclude East Indians, required that anyone wishing to enter Canada must travel by continuous passage from his or her country of origin. At the same time, unofficially, steamship companies were influenced against providing a direct service from India.

Gurdit Singh was visiting Hong Kong on business when news of the continuous passage defeat reached him. Like others of his generation, Singh had left his childhood home in the Punjab to find

a living elsewhere. He'd achieved success in business and eventually made a place for himself in Singapore. Now fifty-five years old, a widower with a seven-year-old son, he saw another opportunity. Realizing the defeat of the continuous passage rule meant the doors of Canada were temporarily ajar, he met with some of the Indian community in Hong Kong and proposed a plan. Once assured of their support, Singh located a former collier, the *Komagata Maru*, which he was able to lease for a monthly fee of \$11,000. The ship, under the leadership of one Captain Yamamoto, came complete with a Japanese crew. Singh ordered 533 wooden benches installed in the hold as passenger accommodation, and announced a late March sailing date. While he made these arrangements, Canada slammed her doors shut once again by means of a temporary cabinet order preventing the landing of any artisan or labourer at British Columbia ports of entry.

F.W. May, the governor of Hong Kong, was well aware of Canada's concerns with immigration and sent the Canadian government a cable warning of Gurdit Singh's plans. As an additional courtesy, he held the *Komagata Maru* in port for several days while waiting for a response. But on April 4, with no instructions from Canada and no legal right to prevent the ship from sailing, he released it.

The migrants reached Canada May 22. During a brief stop at William Head quarantine station on Vancouver Island, Singh spoke to the press, saying, "We are British citizens, and we consider we have a right to visit any part of the Empire. We are determined to make this a test case and if we are refused entrance into your



The Indians, most of whom were Sikhs from the Punjab, spent two months detained aboard the *Komagata Maru* in Vancouver harbour. Most of them were rural people who had mortgaged their property in India to raise the fare to Canada. They expected to save and invest most of the money they could earn in British Columbia, then return to their villages in India. They returned sooner than they expected.

country, the matter will not end here."

Early next morning the *Komagata Maru* dropped anchor in Vancouver harbour. Among the first visitors to the ship were Malcolm Reid and William Hopkinson. As they came onboard, Singh announced, "What is done with this shipload of my people will determine whether we shall have peace in all parts of the British Empire." Singh's proclamation was of little interest to Reid, who clearly understood what was expected of him.

The law demanded that any person detained by immigration must be examined forthwith and immediately landed or rejected. Reid, however, delayed and procrastinated, processing the migrants as slowly as possible. Medical examinations, which should have taken a few hours, consumed three days. When J. Edward Bird, the attorney hired to represent the passengers by a shore committee of resident Indians, asked permission to go aboard and consult with his clients, Reid refused to allow it. Bird stated his case to higher authorities and was informed that he was subject to the will of the local immigration agent. "Gurdit Singh," Bird remarked, "is even more a prisoner than if he were in a penitentiary."

On Monday, June 1, the medical examinations completed, the board of inquiry began examining the cases of individual migrants. Reid worked as slowly as possible, ferrying the passengers ashore one at a time for their hearings, and made no decisions that could be challenged in court.

The following week Gurdit Singh complained the ship was running low on food and water. Reid responded by sending water out to the ship, but no food. Later that day Hopkinson went aboard and got enough money from Singh to provide each passenger with one meal.

By now the ship's owners had contacted Captain Yamamoto, informing him that \$15,000 in lease money was due. He was instructed to bring the ship back to Hong Kong if the money wasn't paid by June 11. On June 10, a representative of the shore committee presented Gardner Johnson, the Vancouver agent for the ship's owners, with \$11,000 and a request that the ship's charter be signed over to them. Reid immediately adjourned his board of inquiry hearings. If the negotiations collapsed, the *Komagata Maru*'s owners would order the ship's immediate return to Hong Kong, and Reid would be relieved of any further responsibility to the migrants. But two days later the shore committee handed the balance of the money over to the shipping agent.

After a full month in Vancouver harbour, twenty-one of the passengers had proved previous domicile in Canada and been allowed to land. Reid's board of inquiry had examined eight of the remaining cases, but made no decisions. Bird, the migrants' lawyer, was anxious for a test case, but Stevens, still smarting from the defeat of the continuous

Right: Increasing the pressure on the *Komagata Maru*, the HMCS *Rainbow* (far right), one of only two boats in the Canadian navy, steamed from its Esquimalt base on Vancouver Island and dropped anchor near the Japanese-owned ship. Two days later, the *Komagata Maru* set sail for Hong Kong by way of Yokohama. For the Canadian authorities, at least, the crisis was over.

Below: The *Komagata Maru* passengers dressed to go ashore, May 23, 1914. Foreground left is Gurdit Singh, the fifty-five-year-old widower whose plan it was to challenge the continuous passage rule that barred East Indians from immigrating to Canada.



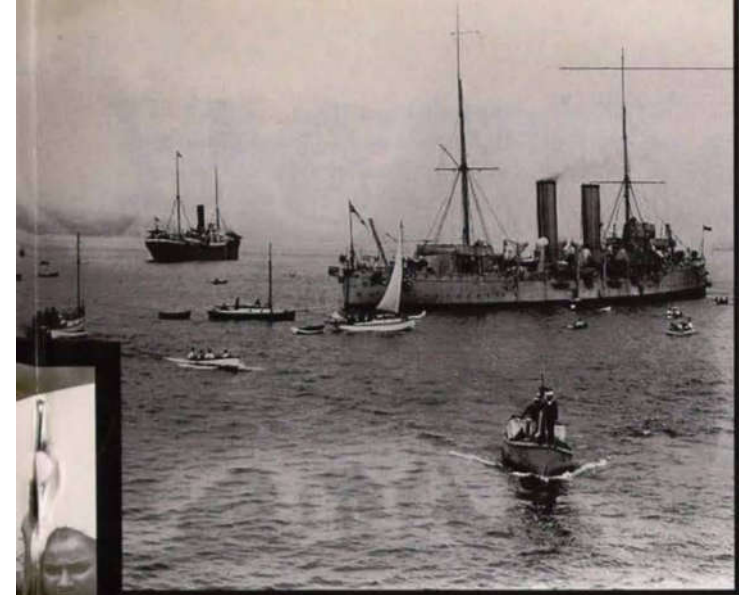
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passage rule, wasn't interested. "Some say 'why do you not go to the courts?'" he said. "I say we are willing to go to the courts if we can find an honest court to go to."

Reid wired Ottawa expressing the importance of staying out of the courts. He thought a better solution would be to forcibly remove the migrants from the *Komagata Maru* and send them back to India on another ship. The merits of this proposal were discussed at the highest levels, but eventually rejected as being too risky. It seemed there was no way to avoid the courts, and on June 25, a full thirty-five days after the migrant ship's arrival, Bird was told a test case would be allowed.

For the hearing Bird selected Munshi Singh, a twenty-six-year-old farmer from the Punjab. Munshi Singh had only a little cash with him, but believed his farm in India was worth about \$8,000. He hoped to be allowed to work in B.C. and send money home to his wife. Unfortunately, any witnesses able to substantiate his claims were still in India. The application was denied for lack of corroborating evidence, and Munshi Singh was ordered deported.

Bird immediately took the case before a court of appeal, fully expecting to have the ruling overturned. But he was no match against the immigration department lawyers or the mood of the court. All five appeal judges upheld the board of inquiry's decision to deport.



YAMAGUCHI KENJI / GETTY IMAGES

The local press, which had been unsympathetic from the beginning, was suddenly magnanimous. "Mr. Gurdit Singh has given up the fight and is going home. It will probably be agreed that he is a good sportsman and has played his game to the limit. ... When a man is defeated and meets his defeat without making a fuss it is only sportsmanlike to realize his conquerors bear him no ill will. ... Canada bears Mr. Gurdit Singh no grudge for having done his best."

Reid didn't believe Singh was planning to leave quietly. He was aware that certain members of the Indian community were acquiring weapons, and had heard that both he and Hopkinson were targeted for assassination. Where his previous tactic had been delay, Reid now had every reason to speed up the process. Even though the test case had decided against Munshi Singh, proving that the court would support board of inquiry decisions, each immigrant was still entitled to an individual hearing. To expedite matters, Reid decided to move proceedings out to the ship.

The board of inquiry arrived at the *Komagata Maru* to find its passengers had been without food or water for three days. After waiting for two months to have their cases heard, the migrants now refused to cooperate, threatening to go ashore unless they were fed by nine o'clock that evening. As far as Reid was concerned the situation couldn't be better. He withdrew and sent just enough food for immediate needs to the ship that evening. The next morning he presented Yamamoto a bill for the food, and began drafting deportation papers. The migrants' refusal to be examined by a board of inquiry was all the reason he needed.

That day Yamamoto took the food bill to Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper, the Canadian lawyer representing the ship's owners. Not one to waste time, Tupper spent the weekend exchanging cables with his close friend, Prime Minister Robert Borden. Early the next week Reid received instructions to completely provision the *Komagata Maru* for her return voyage. But there was a catch. None of the food was to be delivered until the ship cleared Canada's five-kilometre limit and was in international waters. On July 17 Gardner Johnson brought the clearance and deportation papers out to the ship and explained the arrangements for provi-

When officials tried to force their way aboard, they were met with a violent barrage of lumps of coal and pieces of brick.

sions. He added that if the migrants didn't leave willingly they'd be removed by force.

The *Komagata Maru* remained at anchor that night and all the next day. Reid, impatient with the delay, decided to seize control of the ship. He assembled a force of 160 armed men and headed out to the migrant ship well after midnight. The passengers were wide awake and waiting when Reid and his small army arrived. When the officials tried to force their way aboard, they were met with a violent barrage of lumps of coal and pieces of brick. It seemed there was no choice but to withdraw.

H.H. Stevens, by now thoroughly frustrated with his inability to be rid of the migrants, wired the prime minister to request military support. Canada's entire navy at the time consisted of two secondhand warships procured in 1911, one of which, HMCS *Rainbow*, was based at Esquimalt on Vancouver Island. Borden agreed to make her available. He also cabled his minister of agriculture, Martin Burrell, in the Okanagan. The situation was escalating dangerously, and he needed an impartial outsider with some authority on the scene.

On July 21, the *Rainbow* steamed into Burrard Inlet and dropped anchor near the *Komagata Maru*. Her broadside guns were uncovered and aimed at the migrant ship. Thousands of people gathered around the harbour, and countless small craft milled about in the vicinity of the larger vessels. The Sikhs aboard the *Komagata Maru* sang a patriotic song and held a council of war, while the four children aboard played on the ship's bridge.

Burrell had arrived that morning and been fully briefed. He agreed that it was necessary to take control of the migrant ship as soon as possible, but wanted to do it without unnecessary violence. After speaking to Walter Hose, commander of the *Rainbow*, who believed an attack might cost as many as a hundred lives, Burrell decided the best solution would be the granting of concessions.

Negotiations commenced, with the migrants demanding double the provisions already offered, and a return to Calcutta instead of Hong Kong. They also wanted the government to return the money they'd spent chartering the boat. Agreement was quickly reached (the migrants received no money) and the loading of provisions, a task that would take several days, began that evening. Just after sunrise, on July 24, the *Komagata Maru* sailed away from Vancouver harbour, escorted by the *Rainbow*. The migrants were bound for Hong Kong by way of Yokohama, the promise of a direct return to Calcutta having been revoked at the last minute.

The migrants arrived at Yokohama on August 16 to find that war had broken out in Europe while they were at sea. An Indian revolutionary met them with the news and two hundred pistols, which he hid onboard, saying the time to strike had come. Other important news came in the form of a letter from the colonial secretary of Hong Kong, threatening the migrants with arrest if they tried to land there. Gurdit Singh contacted the British consul at Yokohama,

requesting funds and provisions sufficient to reach India, but was refused.

The outbreak of war profoundly effected the migrant Sikhs' situation. Hopeful of a new and prosperous life in Canada, they'd left their homes nearly six months before. Now, rejected by Canada, they found themselves unwanted anywhere in the British Empire. The racist attitudes of the day were a major part of their difficulties, but there was more to it than that: Hopkinson was convinced some members of the shore committee in Vancouver were revolutionaries and reasoned that some of those aboard the *Komagata Maru* were sympathetic with their views.

Britain, distracted by the war, had become vulnerable in India, and the revolutionary groups showed signs of increasing activity. Hopkinson, ever watchful, identified more than a hundred known seditionists leaving the west coast of North America for India. Alerted, the viceroy decreed a special Ingress to India ordinance, a new law that empowered him to arrest anyone entering the country who was judged a danger to the state.

Yamamoto, without the funding or authority to proceed further, took the *Komagata Maru* to her home port at Kobe. He'd fulfilled his duty as he saw it, and the passengers were on their own. Two Indian students now joined the ship and organized a demonstration march around the town. The procession ended up at the British consulate, and the consul general invited a few of the marchers in for tea. After they left he contacted the Indian government about the migrants' plight. This time the response was favourable, and funds were authorized to bring the ship to India under Yamamoto's command.

On September 26, the *Komagata Maru* entered the broad mouth of the Hooghly River on the east coast of India. Ninety kilometers downstream from Calcutta, they were signalled to stop by a European officer in a launch. They dropped anchor in the middle of the river, and a number of policemen, accompanied by three high-ranking officials, came aboard to search the ship. When nothing incriminating was found, they were allowed to proceed. The next day, as the *Komagata Maru* approached Budge Budge, twenty-seven kilometres from Calcutta, they were stopped again. The captain was told to tie up at a jetty next to the Budge Budge railway station, and the passengers were ordered off the ship.

The officials explained that a special train had been arranged to transport the Sikhs home to the Punjab, but Gurdit Singh was suspicious and at first refused to disembark. Eventually, however, he relented and came down the gangplank carrying the *Granth Sahib*, the Sikh holy book, on his head. He led his people to a tree that grew a little distance from the station and they sat on the ground to wait.

While they waited, the officials acquainted them with the Ingress to India ordinance, indicating that it gave them authority to transport the passengers to the Punjab. Singh

responded that there was no work in the Punjab, and they wanted to go to Calcutta. Neither side was willing to concede, and the officials withdrew to the station telegraph office nearby.

At midafternoon Singh stood up and walked across the railway tracks to the road. With some two hundred and fifty of his people following, he began walking down the road towards Calcutta. After a little more than an hour the Sikhs met a force of policemen armed with revolvers and bamboo sticks. A company of 150 Royal Fusiliers of the City of London Regiment were somewhere on the road behind them. Gurdit Singh expressed his wish to continue on to Calcutta, but was told it was impossible, and that they must return to Budge Budge.

Back at the station the Sikhs sat on the ground again, and the police lined up on either side to prevent anyone leaving without permission. The officials had withdrawn some distance to consider matters when they were disturbed by the sound of gunfire. The Royal Fusiliers, still approaching when the shooting began, came running up and opened fire as well. It was dark by then, and those who were able escaped into the countryside.

The police apprehended eight of the wounded almost immediately, and soon captured twenty-five more who had escaped. When daylight came, they discovered the bodies of twelve Sikhs and two local residents who'd been in the vicinity when the shooting took place. Of those who escaped, 193 were eventually caught, among them, Gurdit Singh's seven-year-old son. A total of eighteen Sikhs died from wounds sustained during the shooting; one other died from cholera contracted while he was a fugitive. Of those arrested, 179 were soon released.

Three months after the *Komagata Maru* left Vancouver, William Hopkinson was shot dead as he stood in a hall at the provincial courthouse in Vancouver. His assassin, Mewa Singh, surrendered at the scene of the crime. At the trial ten days later, Singh declared that Hopkinson had tried to get him to give evidence against his companions and killed him for the sake of honour. "I know I have shot Mr. Hopkinson," he said, "And I will have to die." No defence was offered and he was sentenced to hang.

Malcolm Reid was temporarily transferred to Ottawa for his own safety, and demoted to a less sensitive position when he returned to Vancouver. Seven years after the incident at Budge Budge, Gurdit Singh turned himself in. He was charged with preaching sedition and served five years in prison. After his release Singh became active in politics and was a delegate to the All-India Congress at Lahore in 1929. He died in 1954, having lived long enough to see India gain her independence. ■

Philip Jensen is a writer living in Victoria, B.C. His last article, "The Architect & the Lady," appeared in the June/July 1999 issue of the *Beaver*.

SINISTER SHADOWS



The *Komagata Maru* incident did not go unnoticed by the national press. This editorial cartoon appeared in *Regina's Morning Leader*.

What is now the intersection of York and Locke Streets in Hamilton, Ontario, is not remarkable. But on July 20, 1814, eight men—Isaiah Brink, Adam Cryslar, John Dunham, Noah Payne Hopkins, Dayton Lindsey, George Peacock, Jr., Benjamin Simmons, Aaron Stevens—stand on wagons there and dangle from the end of a rope when those wagons pull away. They have been found guilty of treason; it is wartime.

Hindsight tells us that for Canada, that is a lot of punishment for what must have seemed a lot of crime. Only four more than this met a similar fate in Regina Barracks in 1885. That was after Louis Riel and eleven native Canadians had fought pitched battles with government forces. These eight men who were hanged at Hamilton, along with twice as many others who did not pay the full penalty, had been caught raiding their neighbours.

Any Canadian history book tells you a great deal about the reasons why Riel swung. But because official chroniclers have tended to downplay the degree of dissent in Upper Canada during the War of 1812, you have to dig a little deeper to discover what made the rulers of Upper Canada stage a public hanging of this scope. One thing you learn: the space between the administration-of-justice blade and the political-necessity blade of the scissors is a very dangerous place for little men to get caught.

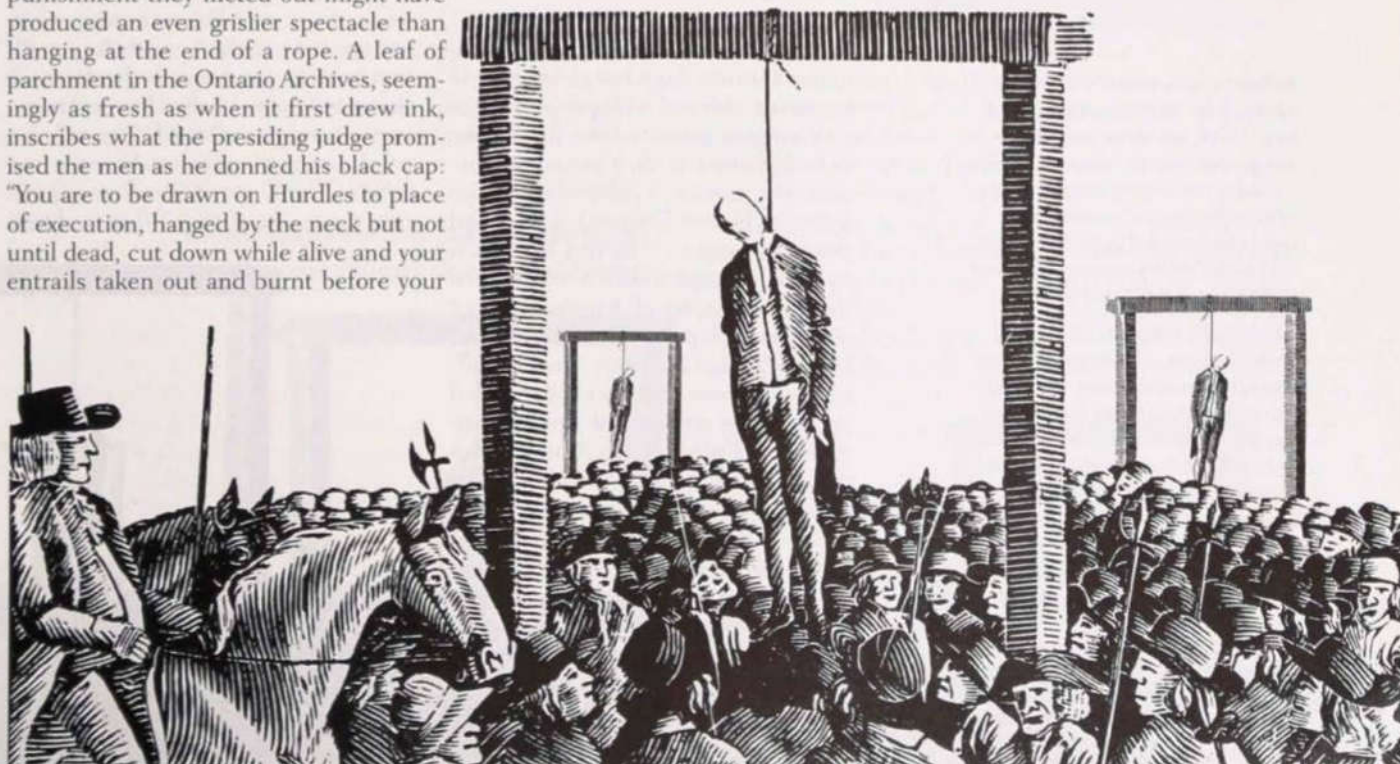
The 1814 assizes at Ancaster, the trials that resulted in the guilty verdicts, took place during May and June. The three judges—Chief Justice Thomas Scott, William Campbell, and William Dummer Powell—handed down clear-cut verdicts of guilty or not guilty. But the punishment they meted out might have produced an even grislier spectacle than hanging at the end of a rope. A leaf of parchment in the Ontario Archives, seemingly as fresh as when it first drew ink, inscribes what the presiding judge promised the men as he donned his black cap: "You are to be drawn on Hurdles to place of execution, hanged by the neck but not until dead, cut down while alive and your entrails taken out and burnt before your

The Ancaster Eight

by
Dennis
Duffy

Upper Canadians were not united against the American foe in the War of 1812.

Many were indifferent, some dissented, not a few went over to the enemy. What was the governing elite to do? Hang the traitors and cow the population, of course. But make sure to do so in the most scrupulously legal way.





William Dummer Powell (1755–1834), a judge of the Upper Canadian Court of King's Bench, was one of three justices who presided over the assizes at Ancaster that led to the hanging of eight men. In 1816, he became the Speaker of the Legislative Council of Upper Canada and chief justice, the first permanent resident of the province to hold that office.

John Beverley Robinson (1791–1863), attorney general of Upper Canada at the time of the Ancaster assizes, was a leading member of the Family Compact, the Tory elite of the early nineteenth century, and a strong defender of the connection with Great Britain and the established Church of England. Though determined to punish sedition in wartime, he believed society's long-term interests were served by seeing justice done through civilian, not military, courts.

faces, your heads cut off bodies divided into four quarters, heads and quarters to be at the King's disposal."

Such a manifestation of royal justice never surfaced in Upper Canada. Perhaps no one could be found with the stomach for actually carrying out such a ritual. More likely the restraint sprung from the same motives that brought about the trials and executions themselves: the need to show the flag, to quell dissent, and to make clear that an embattled government could still punish subjects who took up arms against it. Having shown its power, a hard-pressed government saw no need to underline its message with the guts of its exemplars. What had brought the government of Upper Canada to such a pass?

Begin with the beginnings of the War of 1812 in Upper Canada, and with what General Isaac Brock, administrator of Upper Canada, wrote that year to his superiors in Quebec:

My situation is most critical, not from anything the enemy can do, but from the disposition of the people—The population, believe me is essentially bad—A full belief possesses them all that this Province must inevitably succumb ... Most of the people have lost all confidence ...

Brock's observations were spot on. Upper Canada, from the perspective of its rulers, teemed with people whose civic religion consisted of a firm desire to be left alone in their pursuit of success. The province's political elite, consisting of United Empire Loyalists and their descendants who had lost much in earlier struggles with what became the United States of America, settled as exiles in Upper Canada with the knowledge that their very sense of selfhood and their livelihoods depended upon the preservation of British institutions in British North America. But the economic realities of colonial settlement (experienced farmers made successful settlers who could contribute to government revenues, and the U.S. had lots of land-hungry experienced farmers) compelled even a

Loyalist hero like Governor John Graves Simcoe to offer free land to Americans willing to swear an oath of allegiance. By the time of the U.S. invasions of 1812, these "Late Loyalists" outnumbered the original U.E.L.s by a factor of four to one.

Swearing an oath of allegiance to the Crown did not turn freehold farmers into feudal levies. Brock, a warrior's warrior, was dealing with a group of civilian's civilians. George Sheppard's 1994 social history of the War of 1812, *Plunder, Profit, and Paroles*, shows that U.E.L.s and latecomers admired their defenders, the British regulars—but from a distance. When British quartermasters paid civilians for goods and services in hard currency, the flag flew high. When soldiers requisitioned, pilfered, and plundered, the colours dipped. Militia units suffered from malingerers and no-shows. Farmers flocked to a winning standard, but flocking did not always mean fighting. William Hull, first commander of the American invaders, proved a military dunce, but his political savvy led him to issue a proclamation promising Upper Canadians that their property was safe as long as they stayed out of the fighting. It was an offer a great many farmers found difficult to refuse.

As the war flared and then smouldered along from one year into two, however, a number of Upper Canadians moved from dissent into resistance, from indifference into open enmity. In 1776, the English Tory tradition, with its emphasis on the duties of the subject, had helped turn Americans who espoused the Whig tradition emphasizing the subject's liberties into rebels. The Upper Canadian opposition came out of that Whig tradition



(though it worked in a political culture where the concept of a loyal opposition was a bit novel). Their principled suspicion of authority saw to it that Brock failed to extract from the colonial assembly the emergency powers that he sought (for example, the suspension of *habeas corpus*). Wartime, however, finally forced the colonial assembly into granting government those emergency powers. It also put paid to the idea of a loyal opposition. Eventually, such prominent political figures in the colonial assembly as Barnabas Bidwell and Abraham Markle, whose Whiggish principles increasingly riled the Tory placeholders at the seat of government, crossed the line. When they took up arms on behalf of the American invaders, those in power nodded and said that that was where these dissenters had been heading all along. What Bidwell and Markle's enemies saw as a deliberate leap, we might judge to be a push, a winnowing of war. Yet if you were a member of Upper Canada's elite and hated that opposition and thought it traitorous, then you had to wonder whether the province was infested with others who were more than halfway along that road. Could something be done to make them veer from the path of dissent and return to the straight and narrow?

By 1814, the elite in York (Toronto) felt like they were looking at a lost world, a rerun of the earlier American debacle in 1776. General malaise, indifference, and war-weariness afflicted the thinly settled population. Along the Western and Niagara peninsulas, which had seen American invasions, some Upper Canada residents fought alongside the invaders. Every time an American reinvasion seemed likely, sporadic guerrilla actions broke out. Loyal citizens in these afflicted zones clamoured for two things: protection from further invasion and punishment for their predatory neighbours who had assisted the invaders. Finally, and most disturbing, was the level of dissent in the Tory-blue citadel at York. York had been captured and temporarily occupied on two occasions. Looters and arsonists overran the town. Not all the villains wore American uniforms. Every tavern and pothouse (and the town was no desert for a thirsty man) seemed to buzz with seditious remarks, humming with defeatism and damn-the-King. Anyone who could count above ten and look at a map knew that a determined American force could grab as much of Upper Canada as it wanted

all the way east to Kingston. Could nothing be done?

If you were Attorney General John Beverley Robinson, brightest of the colony's civilian rulers, and his fellows on the Executive Council, you brought a certain historical perspective to the situation. More than thirty years earlier, in what used to be the Thirteen Colonies, your U.E.L. ancestors had rung alarm bells while the colonial power lay abed fumbling with its britches, so that what had been simmering disaffection flared into riot and rebellion. Your forbears hit the road as refugees. You didn't want this to happen again.

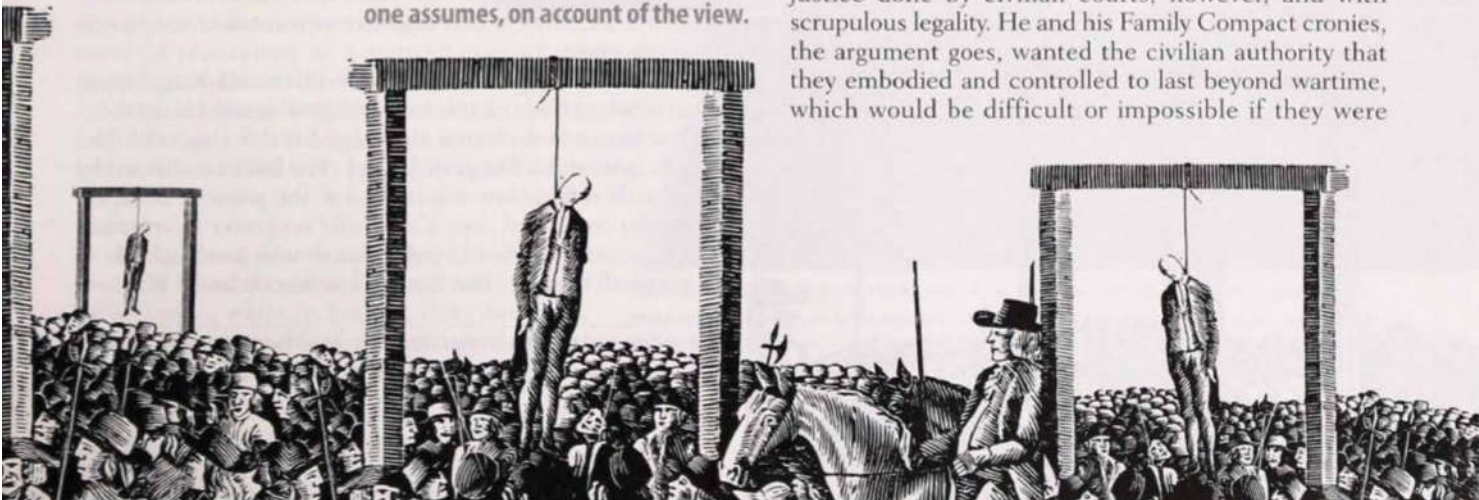
Upper Canada's leaders faced a challenge. Could a social order that could not even punish its wartime enemies claim to rule these territories when in future peace broke out? Emergency measures had been approved. Numbers of the disloyal had been swept up, tried, and jailed in 1813. But had this squelched sedition and open resistance? Listen to the drunken roar coming out of the grogshops. Could something more be done?

York was not the only place feeling that urgency. In the burnt-over Niagara peninsula, community leaders had been trying to prod the authorities into taking further action against the enemy within since April 1813. Leave to the Royal Navy the task of burning Washington. Was the supposed government of Upper Canada too feeble to punish arson in Niagara? The beleaguered militia of Norfolk County (Niagara's Erie shore) captured eighteen settlers in the process of raiding their neighbours in November 1813. What was to be done with them?

Here were men caught with smoking guns. It was wartime. Why not just shoot them? Or pause a moment to hand them over to a drumhead military court, which would then shoot them? Or lock them up somewhere and shoot them when they tried to escape? Remember, the highest colonial authorities came from military rather than civilian backgrounds. These captured settlers were civilian, but military authorities sought prompt and exemplary justice against these wretches, guilty figures who could also serve as stand-ins for all the protected traitors now thumbing their noses at the authorities from the other side of the border. Attorney General John Beverley Robinson, pillar of the establishment, at this point stalled. He appeared to fuss over the kind and nature of the charges to be laid, the venue for the trials and so forth, while his military superiors grew increasingly impatient.

But Robinson, too, wanted justice. He wanted to see justice done by civilian courts, however, and with scrupulous legality. He and his Family Compact cronies, the argument goes, wanted the civilian authority that they embodied and controlled to last beyond wartime, which would be difficult or impossible if they were

The hangings were held on Burlington Heights, one assumes, on account of the view.



shown to have spent the war kowtowing to military directives and procedures. Their enemies said they were trying to carve out a sphere of control that could be used to legitimize their later claims for power, but we must respect what their behaviour indicates—the conviction that a preserved Upper Canada had to be civilian controlled. Underpinning their argument was a philosophical notion: the Canadian state and its British origins are meaningless without the structure of a rule of law. The Loyalist origins of Upper Canada necessitated affirming such British institutions as the subservience of the military power to the civil.

Whatever the contention between military and civilian authorities, one fact is clear: Canada's ruling elite somehow rallied and recovered. The trial was scheduled for May, 1814. Making use of the law and its military allies, maintaining at least the façade of civilian control, the elite produced a theatre of repression, a demonstration of their unwillingness to dither while their power base eroded. They still possessed the power to try and punish. Legality would henceforth mark any attempt at forcibly imposing civil peace. The entity that would later become the Dominion of Canada would maintain a fervent allegiance to punishing dissent through scrupulously legal means. When Riel and his followers were tried and condemned it was by a civil court rather than by their military conquerors.

From the perspective of Riel's trial, the Ancaster Assizes seem a minor affair, though surely not to the eight convicted. The trial records are frustrating. More extensive than most for that period, the papers still contain little more than the names of the cast, the charge, and the verdict. We do not know for sure why some escaped a guilty verdict, only that they did. Why Ancaster? That village lay close enough to York

to remain safe militarily (as parts of Niagara were not), but close enough to Niagara to seem a credible venue for trying crimes committed there. The proceedings enacted a solemn morality play on the fate that awaits rebels. The hangings were held on Burlington Heights, one assumes, on account of the view.

Those executed were fewer than those arrested. What explains the difference also explains the mitigation of the horrible means

of execution that the judge had intoned. Nothing better demonstrates the possession of power than exercising it with lenience. Easing up on terror sent the message to the wavering that the situation was no longer extreme. A seventeen-man grand jury found true bills against twenty-one prisoners and fifty others (some of them long gone from Upper Canada, but deserving of notice, at least). Seventeen of the twenty-one who were tried were convicted; nine were not executed. One of those respited, Jacob Overholser, was a poor, ignorant farmer swept into white water by currents of history he barely sensed. Was that true of the rest of the nine? Was that true of any of the eight? Let philosophers argue where compulsion by circumstance stops and individual choice begins. Robinson thought that he had winnowed out a credible eight; his detailed investigations of their cases had resulted in the recommendations that saved the nine. He and his superiors had no problems about the eight. All had had their day—and more—in court. Not everybody was hanged. No one was drawn and quartered. Those in power could sleep easy. And the eight could simply sleep.

Sleep they did. No partisan yeast could swell into martyrdom men caught raiding their neighbours. "Remember the Ancaster Eight" never became fighting words. This descent into oblivion may explain why no sketches or paintings of the trials or the executions survives; if anyone thought the affair a matter for broadsides, the paper on which they were written has long since blown away. You have to search bound periodicals to discover even the names of those who died on Burlington Heights.

When the colony's rulers went about constructing the Loyalist myth of 1812, they downplayed, rather than demonized, the facts of dissidence. Official chroniclers of the war delivered the narrative equivalent of a general amnesty. In erecting a memorial to Sir Isaac Brock on Queenston Heights, the rulers inscribed a Great Man narrative upon the Niagara landscape. They then supplied him with a set of last words—"Push on, brave York volunteers!"—that reduced disaffection to a remote blip on the horizon of a lion-hearted people united against American invasion. John Mercier MacMullen's early *History of Canada* (1855) pardoned just about everyone, even the Late Loyalists who "nobly adhered to their oath of allegiance." George L. Parkin, turn-of-century imperialist and director of the Rhodes Scholarships, introduced John Beverley Robinson's official biography with three cheers for everyone in central Canada: "The Loyalist of Upper Canada and the Frenchman of Lower Canada were knit together in resistance to unjustified aggression."

What had engendered the conditions allowing Upper Canadians to construct that mythology of unified resistance? What forces had cleared the stage for this pageant? The forces behind the Ancaster Assizes. The forces mobilized by a colonial ruling class who rallied at the point of collapse, and who confirmed their shaky hold on power by impressing it upon the bodies of eight traitors who just might do to frighten all the rest. The Empire had struck back. ■

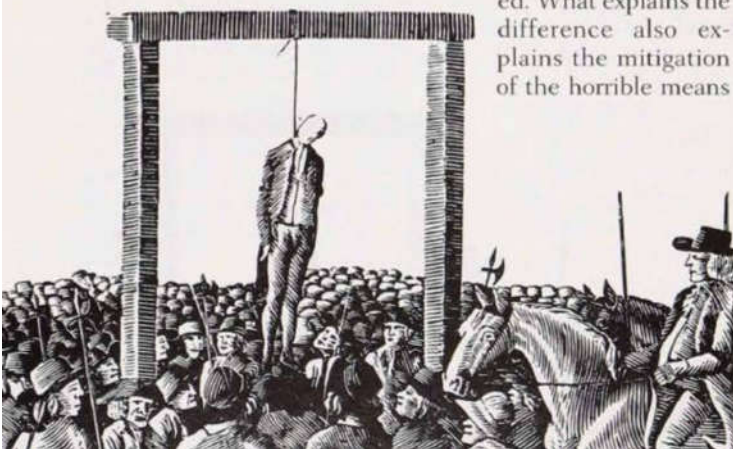
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Dennis Duffy teaches English at Innis College, University of Toronto. His story "The Fate of Tecumseh" appeared in the December 1993 / January 1994 issue of *Beaver*.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the notion that a woman's place was in the home chafed at the soul of at least one woman who placed art above housekeeping, and dreamed of finding a way of nurturing other women in artistic occupations.

With the Women's Art Association of Canada, her dream came true.

Janet Bonellie

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Mrs. Dignam's Pursuit

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ALL PHOTOS WOMEN'S ART ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

It's an inaccurate statement, echoed for so long it was accepted as fact until well into the twentieth century. True, numbers are disappointingly low, but this was never due to lack of creativity—rather to the restrictive domestic role imposed on women by the men in their lives.

French noblewoman Mme Elizabeth Vigy-Lebrun enjoyed an international reputation as a portrait painter under the patronage of Louis XVI.

Angelica Kauffmann, who became a founding member of Britain's Royal Academy in 1768, was a singular talent who worked with Josiah Wedgwood creating classical designs for his Portland vase-inspired jasper ware.

In the 1800s, America produced Mary Cassatt (painter of women and children in sunlit domestic settings), while in France, Rosa Bonheur was recognized as one of the country's leading naturalist artists specializing in domestic ani-

"Why have there been no famous women artists in history?"



Mary Ella (Williams) Dignam, the founder of the Women's Art Association of Canada, was an ambitious woman driven by a singular dedication to the arts. Her unusual marriage allowed her the freedom to travel and study in the absence of her husband, but her feminist views did not endear her to Toronto's male-dominated art establishment.

Housed in an office building (right) in Toronto's business district between 1907 and 1915, the WAAC used its space to advantage, with a skylit art gallery above and display space for its handicrafts below.



mals. Marie Laurencin was accepted as a peer by the postimpressionists. Suzanne Valadon, mother of early twentieth-century French painter Maurice Utrillo, was also a respected artist (although her career was often overshadowed by her popularity as an attractive model).

These women were exceptions and, when it came to acknowledging female talent in the colonies, Canada was virtually a noncontender. During his lecture tour of 1882, Oscar Wilde became friends with Ottawa artist Frances Richards, giving her a letter of introduction to James Whistler so she could jumpstart her overseas career. Like so many ambitious Canadians to this day, she had to leave the country to find acclaim.

Others chose to stay and fight for recognition on the home front.

Mary Ella Williams (1860–1938) was born in Port Burwell, Ontario, to Byron Williams and Margaret Eleanor Ferguson, both from United Empire Loyalist families. She studied art in London, Ontario. Paul Peel, now considered one of Canada's best nineteenth-century artists, was a classmate. In order to pursue her career, Mary left Canada and enrolled at the New York Art Students League, only returning to Port Burwell in 1880 to marry local boy John Sifton Dignam.

They must have had a uniquely liberated marriage. Shortly after the birth of their first child, Frances, Mary Dignam left the care of husband and baby to a sister-in-law and took off for Paris where she haunted the studios of the city's best-known painters. For the following five years she travelled throughout France, Italy, and Holland. She did, however, return home often enough to produce two more children (William and Hugh) by the long-suffering John. Then, in 1886, the couple established a permanent household at 284 St. George Street, Toronto.

(John Dignam dabbled in real estate and was a keen, albeit unsuccessful, inventor of industrial gadgets. Throughout her time as an absentee wife, Mary organized European gallery tours for overseas visitors and sent profits home to John and the children.)

In Toronto, Mary was still loathe to fall into the role of traditional homemaker. She joined the teaching faculty of the Associated Artists School of Art & Design, located in the Yonge Street Arcade (a skylit, galleried thoroughfare that connected Yonge and Victoria Streets until the 1950s). When the school's founder became ill, Mary Dignam took control and was made president.

Despite having more than forty paintings accepted in professional, juried shows, Dignam's name was continually submitted and refused for membership in both the Royal Canadian Academy and the Ontario Society of Artists. Her feminist attitude had made her unpopular.

In 1887, Dignam gathered together a group of ambitious women and took rented space in another part of the arcade.



She is credited with being the first Canadian artist-educator to provide women with live models for life-drawing classes. Up to this point, women were considered "too delicate" to cope with the sight of a nude body. They learned anatomy from classical sculpture.

In April 1890, Dignam officially founded the Women's Art Club. She became the first president and held office for twenty-five years. In 1892, the club was renamed and registered as the Women's Art Association of Canada (WAAC).

It promised to fulfill three roles: locate inexpensive studios and exhibition space, be a resource centre for art-related classes and lectures, and act as a social meeting place for supporters. Appropriately, there were three membership categories—active, out-of-town, and associate (those willing to finance projects without personal involvement). Soon the WAAC had 59 active members and 130 associates.

Never shy, Mary Dignam approached Ishbel, Countess of Aberdeen, and wife of Canada's seventh governor general, to be the group's official patron. She agreed and made several speeches on behalf of women's liberation in the arts. These were not well received by the public; however ongoing patronage of the WAAC by the wives of Canada's gover-

In the early twentieth century, the WAAC was a fixture in Toronto society, and various fundraising entertainments, such as this costume drama (below), were performed in the deep back garden of the association's headquarters at 23 Prince Arthur Avenue.



The WAAC was home away from home to many celebrated talents.

aging Doukhobor housewives from Russia to use their needlework skills as a source of income. She also pushed rural homemakers in Quebec to market their homespun wool and linen products in major Canadian cities as well as in the U.S., the U.K., Italy, Holland, and Germany.

To bring the traditional practice of china painting into the foreground, Dignam orchestrated the creation of the state dinner service. Sixteen dozen pieces of plain white dinnerware were provided by England's Royal Doulton Potteries—the first and only undecorated pieces of Doulton china to carry the company's backstamp. Dignam selected a team of sixteen artisans from across the country to paint the china with patterns depicting Canadian historical sites, flowers, plants, and wildlife. Eleven of the sixteen women were WAAC members. The finished dinner service was presented to Lady Aberdeen when she left Ottawa to return to her Scottish home. (It's showcased today at the Aberdeen estate, Haddo House.)

Buoyed up by the success of the dinner service, which received tremendous press coverage, Dignam included pottery, hand weaving, rug making, lace making, silk painting, woodcarving, metalwork, leatherwork, and bookbinding into the WAAC's annual exhibitions. On numerous occasions the products were sent for sale to major art shows in the U.S., Edinburgh, London, and even Melbourne, Australia. She also reversed the trend and, up to the onset of World War I, imported European travelling shows of women's art to Toronto.

Dignam was tireless. When word went out that the Canadian National Exhibition (originally an annual agricultural fair) would include an art gallery on its Toronto lake-front property, Dignam was at the head of the line demanding space for her members' work. She got it.

Throughout these early years the WAAC drifted through various locations, from the Yonge Street Arcade to space in an office building at King and Jarvis in Toronto's business district to a coach house at Bloor and Yonge. In 1916, finally in good financial shape, the WAAC bought a house with a deep back garden at 23 Prince Arthur Avenue in Yorkville Village, becoming the first women's club in Canada to own its own building. Later, the WAAC purchased 21 Prince Arthur. The two homes are now the association's headquarters.

Mary Dignam achieved her goal. A respected artist in her own right, she created a venue for Victorian women to pursue paying careers. In 1897 and 1898, major shows of members' works were held in the prestigious Roberts Art Gallery in Toronto (still operating at its original Yonge Street location). She was a founding member of the Women's International Art Club (WIAC), which trained European women in art careers and had centres in London, Philadelphia, Paris, and Melbourne. Their first major show was held in 1900 at London's Grafton Gallery (an avant-garde space that hosted England's first exposure to French impressionism curated by Bloomsbury Group member Roger

nor generals continues to this day. Other prominent women lent their support, notably Lady Gzowski (wife of engineer Sir Casimir Gzowski and great-grandmother of contemporary author and radio host Peter Gzowski).

During its peak years before the First World War, the WAAC had a busy schedule. There were regular gallery shows of members' works, classes in life drawing and outdoor sketching, participation in national art projects, and annual fundraisers. There were also "road shows" to promote crafts as a source of revenue for women with limited incomes.

A craft—china painting, embroidery, lace making, quilting, or needlepoint—had always been acknowledged as an acceptable pursuit for the Victorian female because it enhanced her homemaking abilities. Mary Dignam elevated crafts to a trade, a means of helping make turn-of-the-century women financially independent. Many of these Victorians were unmarried or widowed, and their only respectable options were jobs as governesses, companions to wealthy geriatrics, or unpaid housekeepers in the homes of relatives. Mary Dignam gave them another potential means of livelihood without compromising their social status.

Dignam travelled regularly to British Columbia encour-

A WAAC tea party in 1936. Mary Dignam (far right) sits left of a young Sir Ernest MacMillan, conductor of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.



Fry). There were 235 works—all by women.

The WAAC was home away from home to many celebrated talents. Canadian west coast artist Emily Carr used a bed-sitter studio at 23 Prince Arthur while on a Toronto visit in 1935, and gave the association a painting in lieu of rent. The Group of Seven, although male-dominated, admired the WAAC and, of nineteen women painters included in the group's 1923–1931 shows, fifteen were WAAC members. A.Y. Jackson was particularly supportive and held his own one-man shows at 23 Prince Arthur until well into the 1940s. Lawren Harris also exhibited at Prince Arthur and several of his paintings are part of the association's permanent collection. A.J. Casson, last living member of the Group of Seven, was guest of honour at the WAAC centennial in 1987. Two of Canada's most famous women sculptors, Frances Loring and Florence Wyle, were active members. Loring was president (1938–1940) and Wyle was secretary-treasurer.

At its most successful, the WAAC had twenty branches extending from St. John, New Brunswick to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and fulfilled its role as an educational network for Canadian women. However, after World War II, opportunities for women artists opened up. Virtually every major city had an art school available to both sexes, careers were launched, and mixed membership was accepted in most national and provincial organizations.

The WAAC moved from hands-on participation in the arts to providers of funding. To this day the group generates scholarships for the Ontario College of Art and Design, the Royal Conservatory of Music, the music faculty of the University of Toronto, and the National Ballet School. (Canadian ballet stars Karen Kain and Vanessa Harwood were both recipients of WAAC dance scholarships in their student days.)

With the building of Toronto's Bloor Street subway system, the 21–23 Prince Arthur Avenue property was reduced to a shallow back yard and the house itself has been overshadowed by high-rises. But the education continues, as do the art exhibitions and the fundraising parties. History is still being made. Today more than 130 members carry the torch for a dedicated but little-recognized stronghold in Canada's arts community. ■

Janet Bonellie is a freelance journalist specializing in art and design. A former feature writer for *The Globe and Mail*, she is the author of two books on interior decoration and regular contributor to trade and consumer publications in both Canada and the U.K.

The 4th Line Theatre began as an image in the mind of Robert Winslow. About eight years ago he was standing in his barnyard wondering what he, an accomplished actor and director but a decidedly uninterested farmer, was going to do with the beautiful spread of rolling hills, forest, barn, and house he had inherited outside Millbrook, Ontario, near Peterborough. He had just completed a play about violent confrontations between Catholics and Protestants in this very township (Cavan) more than a century ago. An epic story best suited for an impossibly large stage, it had drawn criticism in workshops. As Winslow looked out across the fields he saw masked men from his past bearing down on him, riding horses, carrying torches, hatred in their eyes—nineteenth-century Orangemen out to burn down the homes of bloody papists.

A few months later hundreds of people were gathered

Below, a scene from *The Winslows of Derryvore*, one of the



in his barnyard watching that scene from Winslow's mind exploding before them in real life in a play called *The Cavan Blazers*. Six performances were scheduled. They all sold out and shows were added. *The Globe and Mail* came and gave it a good review. CBC's *The Journal* followed with a feature piece. Between acts, Anglican ministers and Catholic priests, university professors and farmers discussed local history. On stage they saw not just their countrymen but sometimes people bearing their own names—neighbours attacking one another, spitting out their differences in a story that, in terms of drama, seemed almost un-Canadian, certainly not one of those yawners we are often led to believe make up our history.

Every year since those opening weeks in 1992, the Winslow farm has hosted many thousands of spectators witnessing Canada's past. Not only do horses gallop across the stage, but vintage cars sputter around, pigeons swoop in for-

ally turn up on stage, sprinkled among the professionals.

"Environmentally staged drama," as Winslow, the founder and artistic director, calls his theatre's work, has the unique ability to present truths about Canadian history. There is a verisimilitude built into the style. One may sit in a comfortable theatre in Stratford and see seventeenth-century English folk hold forth on a wooden stage or even watch Cartier come to Canada inside a warm exterior in St. John's and lose one's self in the art, but watch men beat a priest for coming to Cavan Township in the nineteenth century when the actor has just walked out of a field the priest may very well have crossed in fear a hundred years ago and one feels a gut-wrenching poignancy.

Last summer the theatre presented two plays: *Fair Play*, in which audiences witnessed events at a nineteenth-century fall fair, with animal judgings, less-than-admirable con games, a horse race, and a maypole; and *The Devil and*

summer offerings mounted on the Winslow farm near Millbrook, Ontario. Now in its ninth season, 4th Line Theatre is dedicated to producing original theatre works about southern Ontario's past.

Bringing History to Life

by Shane Peacock

mation above the audience, and pigs and cows wander about—in character of course. Occasionally patrons travel deep into the nearby woods to sit on seats veritably carved out of the forest to watch plays (about Catharine Parr Traill or William Lyon Mackenzie) emerge out of a log cabin in the wilderness.

The Winslows of Derryvore, a prequel to *The Cavan Blazers*, went back to seventeenth-century Ireland to show how the Winslows and their Catholic enemies had begun the feuds that were carried to Canada. A battle scene, with Oliver Cromwell on a steed and nearly a hundred participants, stretched nearly a kilometre in front of the audience into distant fields. *The Great Farini* employed a real high-wire walk by a Cirque du Soleil performer and trapeze feats by the actors to convey the story of area man William Hunt who defied the peculiar Canadian restrictions of his time to seek adventure on a tightrope over Niagara Falls and at the helm of London freak shows. And *Crow Hill* told the touching, lyrical tale of a local doctor who developed his own little phone company in order to tend to his flock of country patients.

The 4th Line's scripts are usually original, developed within the company, and many have numerous scenes set almost literally on the very ground on which the original historic events took place. For the ticket buyers this results in an engaging experience. Characters seem to reappear from their nearby graves, to live and breathe and make their case again. The actors are sometimes familiar too: farmers, local children, even Winslow's next-door neighbour will occasion-

Joseph Scriven, a darker play, full of romance, gospel singing, full-immersion baptisms, and rumours of murder—all about the strange life of the eccentric Scriven who completed his hymn "What A Friend We Have in Jesus" while living near Rice Lake, Ontario, and whose death remains a haunting mystery.

This summer, in addition to remounting the Scriven play, the theatre takes on perhaps its greatest challenge. Tackling the endless Canadian conundrum of Louis Riel, *Crossings* (*The Bell of Batoche*) tells the story of a near-sacred bell, taken from a Catholic church in Frog Lake, Saskatchewan, in 1885 after the Battle of Batoche and brought to Millbrook by three local soldiers as a spoil of war. For one hundred years it sat captive in the town firehall and legion, and then it disappeared, not long after a truck with Saskatchewan licence plates was spotted on the main street. Today the location of the bell is unknown. But the great national divide between white and native, French and English, and East and West symbolized by the bell's cross-country adventures remains, and appears again on the 4th Line stage in reenacted battles, hangings, and bitter trials. A cooperative production with Métis and First Nations artists from Saskatchewan, *Crossings* represents a milestone in the growth of this little barnyard theatre from an idea in the mind of a farmer's son into a potential national treasure. ■

Shane Peacock wrote *The Great Farini* and *The Devil and Joseph Scriven* for the 4th Line Theatre. His young adult novel, *The Secret of the Silver Mines*, is scheduled for publication by Penguin Books in August.

Fallout from the Family Tree

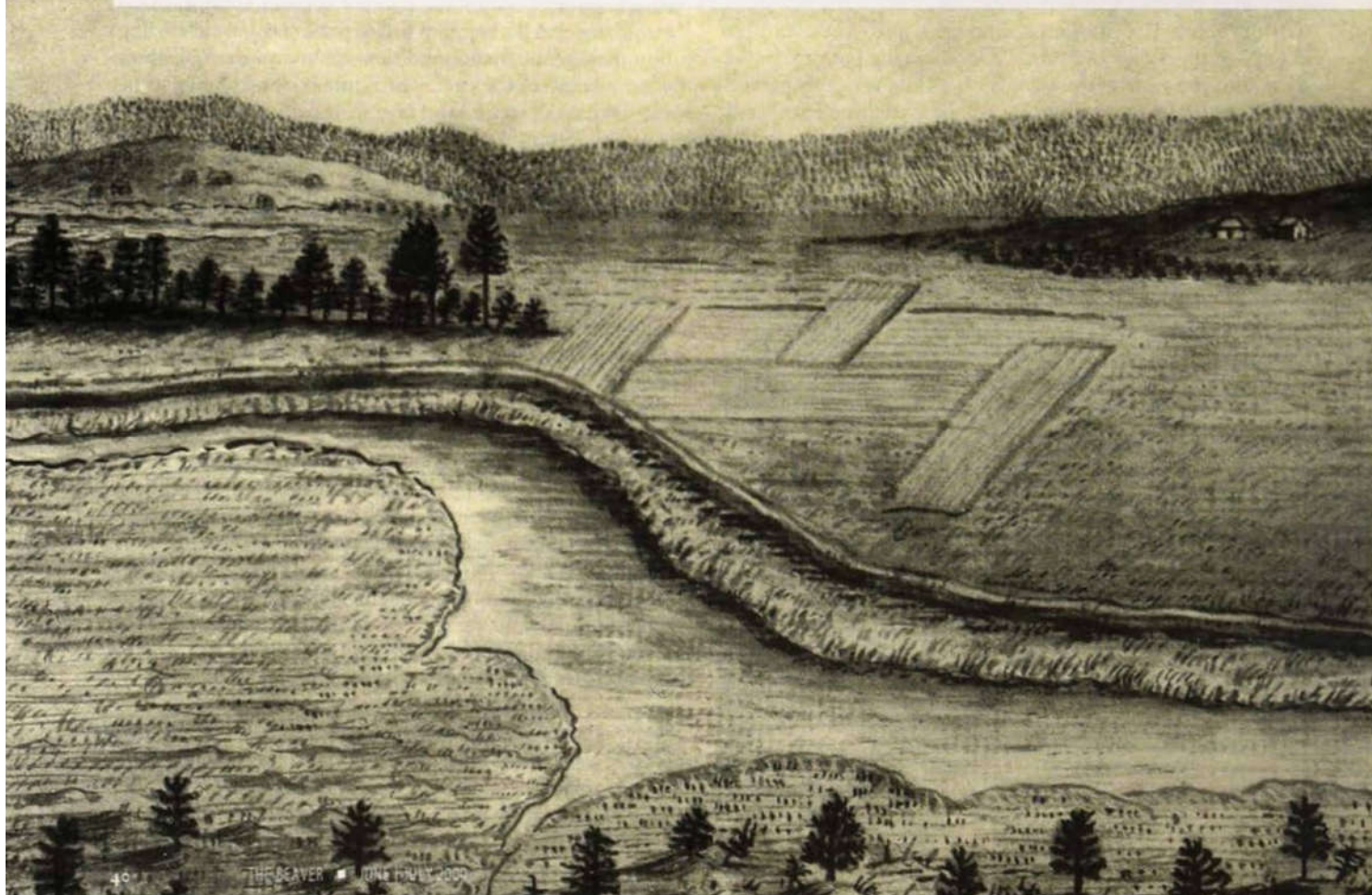
IN THE YEARS JUST BEFORE THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, MORE THAN A THOUSAND YORKSHIRE PEOPLE IMMIGRATED TO THE NOVA SCOTIA-NEW BRUNSWICK BORDER AREA. THIS AUGUST IN SACKVILLE, SOME OF THEIR ESTIMATED 75,000 DESCENDANTS ARE SCHEDULED TO GATHER IN CELEBRATION. IN ANTICIPATION, ONE OF THEM, DOUGLAS HOW, WENT BACK TO ENGLAND TO TRACE HIS YORKSHIRE ROOTS. AS HE REPORTS IN THIS MISSIVE TO HIS ANCESTORS, IT WAS AN ILLUMINATING JOURNEY, ONE THAT RAISED AS MANY QUESTIONS AS IT ANSWERED.

A LETTER TO THE VERY LATE GEORGE DOBSON & WILLIAM CHAPMAN, WHEREVER YOU MAY BE IN A PLACE CALLED HISTORY AND, YES, FAMILY MYTH:

I've been living through fragments of your lives in two ways. First: I'd never gone ancestor-hunting before but, at eighty, decided I'd better get at it before I become an ancestor myself. So, yes, that was me recently poking around the Yorkshire you left more than two hundred years ago and, yes, me having a couple of juicy experiences. At least they seemed that way,

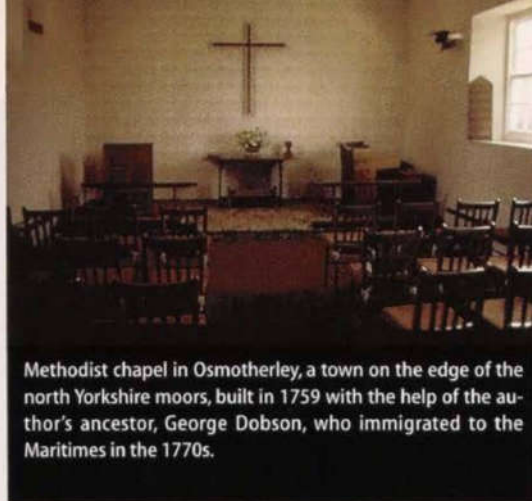
though you devout early Methodists might disagree. So let's just call them unexpected.

That's a word that can be used for the second fragment too, only more so (but more about that later). To begin with there were fifteen of us on a bus tour, which you should find flattering because it says you and the thousand or more Yorkshire people who came to what is now the Nova Scotia-New Brunswick border area between 1772 and 1775 have a real niche in Canadian history. Among descendants there is a mythology about you as the Yorkshire Settlers, and we'll be



saluting you in August when we gather from far and wide in Sackville, New Brunswick.

So there were the fifteen of us and June Hall, our ineffable and knowledgeable Yorkshire guide, in a forty-seven-seat bus on a sort of advance quest for clues to people pivotal in our family trees. That's what you two are to me, my mother having been a Dobson and her mother a Chapman, and you and your wives, both named Mary, were the family heads who transplanted those names in Canada. The others were looking for stuff about Smiths, Truemans, Dixons, Richardsons, Trenholmes, Keillors, but I was the oldest by somewhat, and they were most kind to me and my cane and my stories. June's plan was for us to work on family agendas as well as we could while seeing as much of Yorkshire as possible. We sped through dales like lullabies and fields green with spring and white with sheep, all knitted together by stone fences that made you feel there is order in the world. We ate fabulous breakfasts at B&Bs. We got to moors and wolds and cities, and I soon saw why James Herriot so breathlessly extolled Yorkshire's beauties—and increased real estate values—with his books. More than once I felt it must have made you sad to leave all this for raw, pioneer Canada.

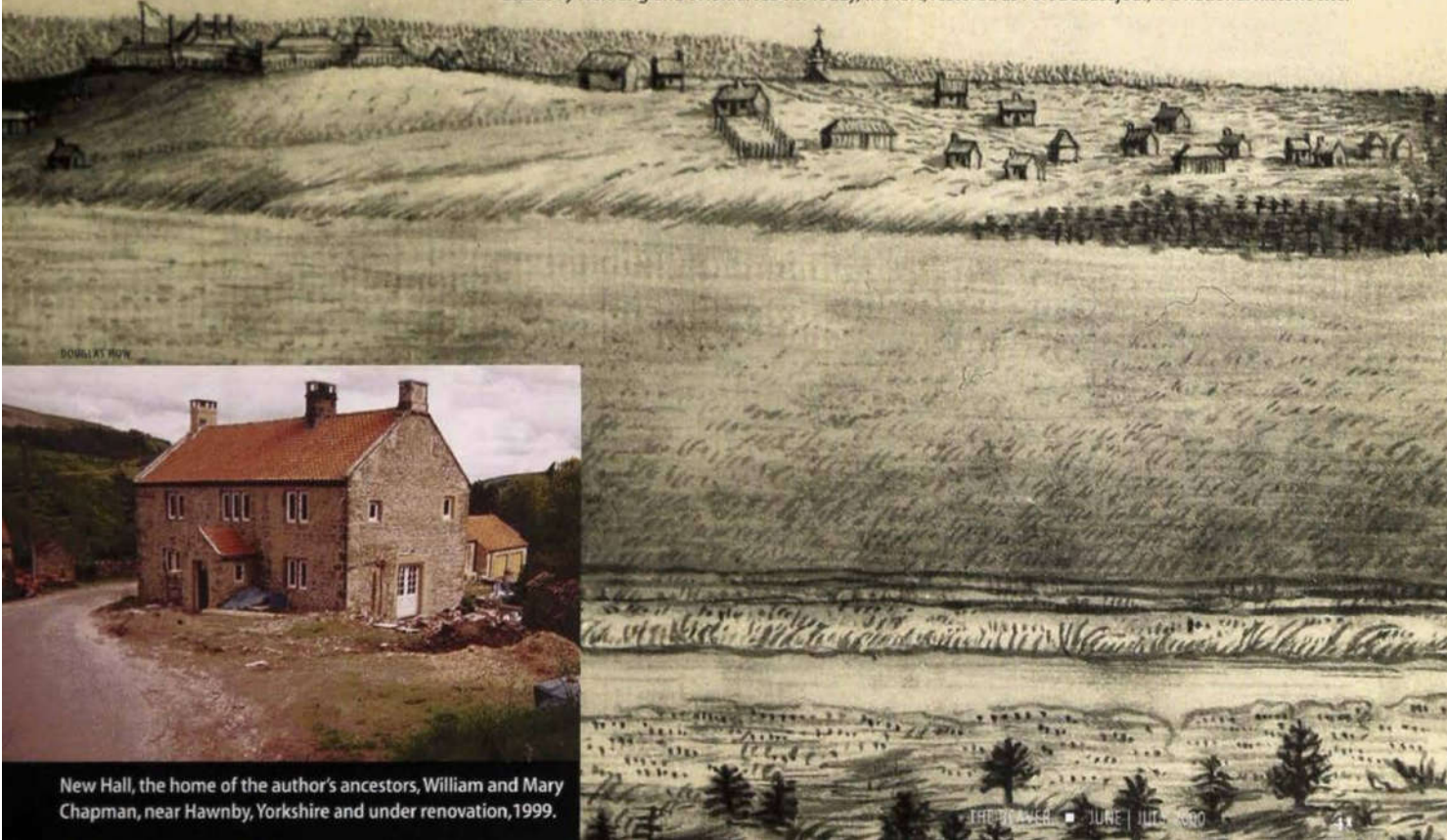


Methodist chapel in Osmotherley, a town on the edge of the north Yorkshire moors, built in 1759 with the help of the author's ancestor, George Dobson, who immigrated to the Maritimes in the 1770s.

REINHOLD MAYER

I went armed with a lot of information kindly provided by Shirley Dobson and Althea Douglas, relatives deep into family history, and I found myself fascinated by the context of your times. Most settlers left as victims of a sort of economic cleansing: great landlords were expanding and updating their agricultural holdings, rents kept rising for their tenant farmers, and in Nova Scotia land would be cheap. When asked to list reasons for leaving England, they said "to seek a better livelihood," because "they could not live." They took up lands in the isthmus connecting

View of Fort Cumberland, 1755, by Captain John Hamilton. Originally named Fort Beauséjour under the French, the fort was renamed Cumberland after a successful British attack in 1755. In 1776, during the American Revolution, the fort, under Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Goreham of the Royal Fencible Americans, frustrated an attack by New England colonial rebels. Today, the fort, restored as Fort Beauséjour, is a national historic site.



New Hall, the home of the author's ancestors, William and Mary Chapman, near Hawnby, Yorkshire and under renovation, 1999.

present-day Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in the relatively few years between two seminal wars. French power had only recently been destroyed in North America and you settled in an area from which French Acadian farmers had been driven in 1755. Moreover, given this power vacuum, you'd barely settled in before American colonists revolted against British rule and your area was swept up in the fighting and the bitterness.

But let me get to those unexpected experiences of 1999, both on the same Sunday. First, we got to Osmotherley, a handsome town on the edge of the north moors, where Shirley's notes said that you, George, a farmer living up the road on family land, had helped found a Methodist society and later build a chapel. Sure enough, the entrance to a stone building bore an inscription that said the building contained a chapel built in 1754. Down a tight, narrow alley alongside a stone wall, another sign marked the chapel itself, though there was no steeple, no separate building. Some of us went in, but we heard singing and stopped at the chapel door. I couldn't resist, however. I tiptoed in and, George, there I was in your Methodist past, in a plain, almost severe room with a simple cross, about a dozen older people sitting on chairs, and a stool John Wesley, the fiery evangelist founder of Methodism (he recorded visiting you several times), used to help add wallop to his sermons because he was so short. A younger, earnest woman was delivering the sermon. She wore glasses and she looked up in surprise as I took a seat. In truth, they all stared, and her next words went beyond that: she said Jesus was with them, was here. In this room. Now. Just after I arrived.

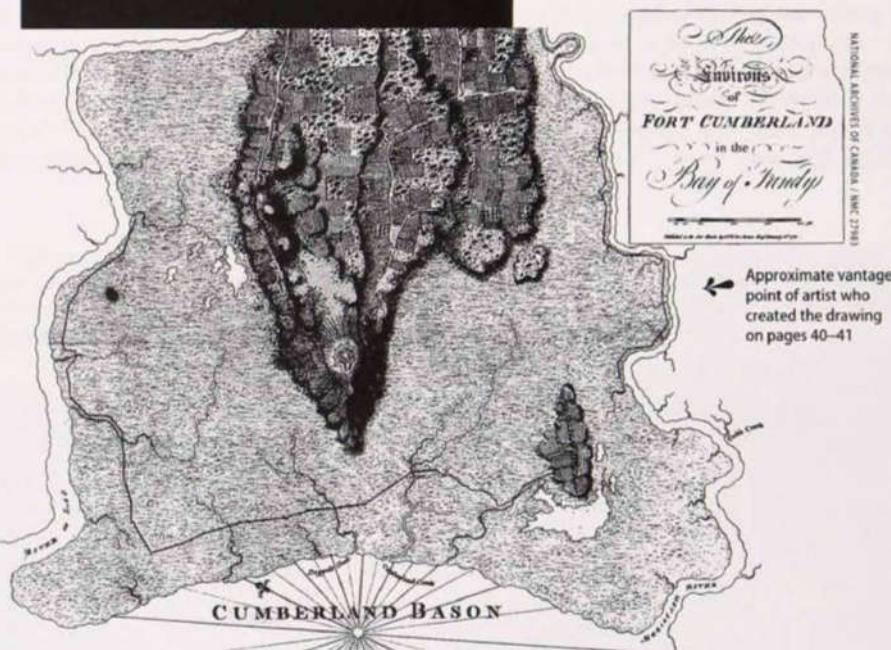
Well, George, you can't beat that for timing, and yes, I confess that I did think later that it's as close as I'll ever come to association with an Immortal Event. Anyway, there was a lull after a prayer and I rose and apologized, said I was there briefly on a bus tour and had to go. Indeed, fled. No one said a word, and I'm sorry if the whole thing offends you.

Nearby there was a sign saying that Hawnby was just ten miles away and, William, I knew that's where you'd lived and it got me thinking that you may have known George, Methodists that you both were, and living so close and all. It also



Above: House built around 1780 by William Chapman at Fort Lawrence, Nova Scotia. The house, one of the oldest existing houses built by English settlers in Canada, was constructed of bricks made from local materials found on the farm. The house was declared a National Historic Site in 1971.

Below: Fort Cumberland in its surroundings.



Approximate vantage point of artist who created the drawing on pages 40-41

got me thinking about how little your descendants know about you, and how most of what they do know has been gathered by people like Shirley and Althea digging into any source they can find, which is the sort of ramshackle way history often gets reconstructed. But on to Hawnby, to where you were a tenant farmer, a husbandman and carpenter, on an estate owned by rent-raising sons of a duke. In tight, treed, comely rural countryside, we got to where we could see the village picturesque on a hill and then to a shattering moment. Just as the bus was about to turn to head for the village a sign announced, "This road unsuitable for coaches and large vehicles."

Another stop, but unlike the chapel door, a more decisive disappointment. A dismal retreat from the very cusp of mythology.

We ended up in a place called Helmsley, with a vast monument to a lord. And there June Hall rescued my hopes. Almost by magic, her partner, Eric Botheroyd, arrived with their small car, and in it, William, she bore me gratefully back towards your home, New Hall. Back to where you decided that, at forty-four, you and Mary and nine children had to leave. Back to another surprise. In 1984 Althea found your home had been renovated since World War II and was, she wrote, "in lovely condition, a rectangular gray stone house with a red tile roof and beautiful garden." But when we got to the site, we found it being renovated all over again,

the interior gutted, though the exterior remained largely unchanged. It was a handsome residence. Delighted, I took a picture and then we drove to the village and I thought of you being there, and of your young son John who would marry Sarah Black and start my Canadian family line.

It was a great trip. In a tumbledown castle, I had my picture taken where kings had sat. I saw the ruins of Roman Catholic abbeys Henry VIII had destroyed, and was awed by York's magnificent minster and its startling contrast to that plain little chapel in Osmotherley. In Hull, where most settlers sailed from, we were greeted by Lord Mayor Brian Petch, a comic magician. In the ornate guildhall, Al Smith, our coordinator, read a letter from his settler ancestor that said Hull was anything but kind to them. Well, the lord mayor was as kind as kind could be, served tea and scones, and had Al wear his ornate official garb for pictures in the council chamber. As cochairman of Yorkshire 2000, Al told him and others about August's celebrations in Sackville, New Brunswick.

When we got home I passed nearby Fort Beauséjour, which, as Fort Cumberland, survived an American Revolution siege. Thanks to Shirley, I realized, George, that this is where your own migration came to an unlikely end. You'd bought nearly seven hundred hectares of nearby land, then died at fifty-two soon after arrival, and there, near the fort, you're buried—a strange ending to a life plagued by the prior loss to disease of ten children, which alone may have led you and Mary to leave England. Or did you leave in part because of religious intolerance? You helped your son-in-law William Wells build a Methodist chapel in Thirsk, your home for years. A church record says he and your daughter Margaret were "among the first Methodists and suffered much persecution in the cause of Christ." Certainly they came with you to the Maritimes, and en route lost a baby of their own.

Even so, there is yet a "what if?" in Dobson mythology. Your brother Richard, by then in his seventies, came out from Yorkshire after your death to attend to the settling of your estate, which the trustee claimed had largely disappeared. But Richard soon died too, and is buried beside you. He came out on the same ship as the Chapmans (a Dobson relative liked to say he alone was described on the passenger list as a gentleman). But what intrigues me, George, is that you were to inherit from Richard land and other assets, probably including his manor house. If he'd died first you might not have migrated at all, and scores of Canadian descendants would not exist. Me included.

Nevertheless, when I got home with my ancestral interest piqued, I

entered your past in a second way. I read a recent book about what happened in the Nova Scotia–New Brunswick border area in the American Revolution. What the conflict did to each of your families had always seemed vague to me, though there seemed no doubt that you were loyal to the British side. But in *The Siege of Fort Cumberland* Ernest Clarke shook me. He says the situation got nasty indeed, for in this remote community American revolutionary activity spilled over. Some people sided with the Americans and some sided with the British. It pitted neighbour against neighbour, divided families, and deeply affected your own when a rebel force, mostly from elsewhere and led by Jonathan Eddy, a local man and former British army officer, besieged patched-up Fort Cumberland in November 1776.

All this swirling around the very Point de Bute area where you two had settled on big properties. Your sons, David Dobson, twenty-three, and John Chapman, fourteen, were both Loyalist soldiers with the fort garrison and were both captured on November 7. David while spying on encircling enemy movements, John when an outpost was overrun. You, William, and son Tom had worked to strengthen the fort, and Tom was apparently inside when it survived a rebel attack on November 13 and an attempt to burn it out nine days later. But for days it was cut off and didn't have the strength to prevent Eddy's men from plundering, burning, and brutally bullying people into supporting them. It was only after reinforcements arrived by sea that the siege was broken November 29 in one swift sweep

Yorkshire 2000

Yorkshire 2000, three years in planning, is scheduled to attract several thousand descendants of the original Yorkshire settlers to the Chignecto region, the border area between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, between August 3 and 10.

Centering on the campus of Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick, Yorkshire 2000 is designed to be both entertaining and instructive, featuring scholarly presentations as well as family reunions and festive events such as theatrical presentations, historical reenactments, genealogy workshops, and period craft displays.

According to local arrangements committee chair Allan D. Smith, himself a descendant of one of the Yorkshire settlers, the event gives recognition to an event in Maritime settlement history that has tended to be overshadowed by the drama of the Acadian expulsion and the influx of United Empire Loyalists in the wake of the American Revolution. In the

1770s, Yorkshire farmers were actively recruited by the Nova Scotia government to tend land left by the evicted Acadians. (New Brunswick would not become a separate colony until 1784.) For their part, the Yorkshire farmers saw migration as a means of escaping the yoke of their landlords and being able to freely practice their Methodism. Unusual for the time, they were required to afford their own passage and purchase their land, rather than receive a government grant. Twenty boatloads of Yorkshire people arrived within a few years of 1772, and many more arranged to come, but conflict between England and its American colony stopped the immigration.

Now, 225 years after the last Yorkshire settler arrived, organizers are hoping this summer's special event will spark both scholarly and popular further interest in the Yorkshire migration. Among the legacies organizers hope to create are a centre for Yorkshire studies at Mount Allison University and a genealogy database. ■

of bullets and flame. And there was the most bizarre twist: William, your home was burned, and so, George, were those of your daughters Margaret and Mary and their husbands William Wells and William Jones—burned not by Eddy's men but by soldiers of the fort garrison who made them flee into the forest. Moreover, Clarke says, there are records of service, William, that say you, Wells, and Jones supported Eddy; that all of you held rebel stores. Then he poses an ameliorating riddle. "It was surprising," he writes, "to find these two Yorkshire settlers (Chapman and Wells) in support of Eddy; perhaps they had been coerced ... or just unlucky in living so close" to Eddy's base. Or perhaps, he says, the British "rough justice had been as inaccurate as it was swift." Certainly, David Dobson and John Chapman must have found it strange that some members of their own families were burned out by their own garrison regiment.

In short, the truth is evasive. What is obvious is that it was a quick and

brutal sequel to your arrival, and it led to what Clarke calls a "purposeful forgetfulness" of events that left a "fractured community" where bitterness kept erupting for years. Both families remained where they were, and maybe in the circumstances descendants felt the whole thing was better stowed away. Certainly I've never heard a relative speak of it. But I suspect they'd reject any suggestion that their ancestors might be termed "purposefully disloyal" to a Britain they'd left so recently. And, as the revolution continued, you, William, apparently worked on strengthening Fort Cumberland again in 1777, just in case. A few years later you Chapmans built a two-storey brick home that's been occupied by a descendant ever since. In fact, it's now a national historic site—on land you originally bought from one Jonathan Eddy. As for me, I'm more aware than ever of how complex family history can be. And family mythology too. **M**

Douglas How is a journalist and author living in St. Andrews, New Brunswick.

Reviews

Featured Books

■ William Osler: A Life in Medicine

By Michael Bliss
University of Toronto Press,
Toronto, 1999
581 pp. illus., \$50 hardcover

■ Double Cross: The Inside Story of James A. Richardson and Canadian Airways

By Shirley Render
Douglas & McIntyre,
Vancouver, 1999
334 pp. illus., \$35 hardcover

■ The Art of Nation- Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary

By H.V. Nelles
University of Toronto Press,
Toronto, 1999
397 pp. illus., \$45 hardcover

■ Indian Fall: The Last Great Days of the Plains Cree and the Blackfoot Confederacy

By D'Arcy Jenish
Penguin Books Canada,
Toronto, 1999
341 pp., \$32 hardcover

COMING IN AUGUST | SEPTEMBER

The Beaver

Roads and Recall

In the middle of the Depression, Social Credit Party leader "Bible Bill" Aberhart promised Albertans good roads and the right of recall—the power to remove a deficient M.L.A. But when the roads didn't appear and discontent grew, the people seized upon their new weapon. Guess who was recall's first casualty? **BY LYNNE BOWEN**

Funny Money

Canadian currency hasn't always been loonies, toonies, and twenty-dollar bills. Beads, beaver pelts, and playing cards, too, were the coin of the realm before the realm had coin. **BY ADRIENNE LEDUC**

Bright Lights, Big Lawsuit

Nova Scotia's Abraham Gesner revolutionized the lighting of cities in the nineteenth century by refining kerosene, a fuel cleaner, cheaper, and brighter burning than the smoky, smelly oils of the day. But the new product made some vested interests very unhappy. **BY ELIZABETH HAIGH**

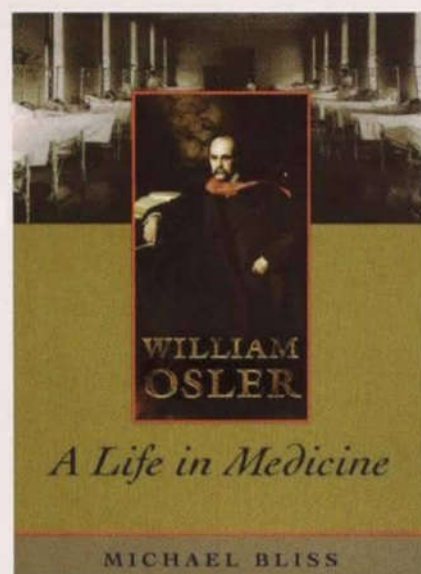
A Doctor for All Seasons

Sir William Osler died of complications of influenza in 1919. Friends, colleagues, and students produced a chorus of tributes and, through a variety of initiatives, sought to enshrine him in the pantheon of great figures in medicine. Yet many of us who entered medical school just two or three decades later knew Osler largely by name only or as the author of lofty but rather turgid essays on medicine and its philosophical dimensions. That he was held in high regard by our elders in the profession and had Canadian roots added to our sense of his significance; but many of us had only a vague appreciation of what he was like as a man, or even what in particular accounted for his reputation. With the publication of *William Osler: A Life in Medicine*, Michael Bliss has brilliantly fulfilled his intention to "introduce the Osler of history to a 21st-century readership."

William Osler was born in Bond Head, Canada West in 1849. He began his medical studies in Toronto and completed them at McGill, where he graduated with a medical degree in 1872. Within a few short years after his return to McGill from graduate studies abroad, Osler had established a reputation as an inspired educational reformer, a popular teacher, and an expert clinician. He was not a great medical scientist in the contemporary sense of that term, which tends to be reserved for experimentalists. Rather, he was an astute integrator of observations made in the clinic with the evidence to be found by careful examination of organs and tissues in the pathology laboratory. This integrative approach was the foundation of his brilliance as a diagnostician.

Osler moved to the United States in 1884 and after a stint at the University of Pennsylvania became professor of medicine and physician-in-chief at Johns Hopkins University's medical school and the Johns Hopkins Hospital. At Hopkins, Osler came to be widely admired and, indeed, loved for his personal warmth, his superb skills as a teacher and clinician, and his complete dedication to the medical profession. Osler was a prolific author

and prodigious worker who filled every moment of every day to the full with clinical practice, teaching, writing, extensive travel, and social engage-



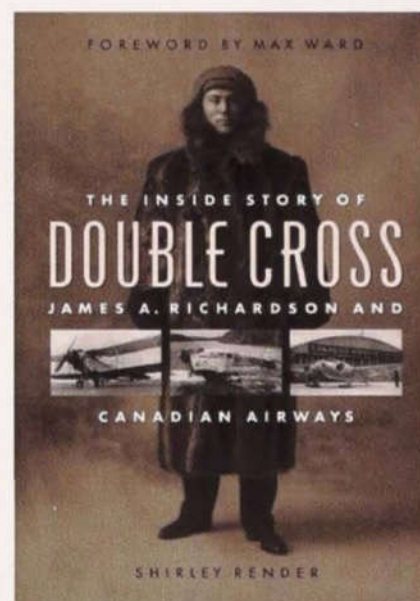
ments. Although he was meticulously well organized and disciplined in his work habits, he had an air of ease about him, a mischievous sense of humour, and a particularly captivating manner with children. It is no wonder that in 1905, at age fifty-five, Osler was ready for a less hectic existence and accepted the Regius Professorship of Medicine at Oxford. He and his wife, Grace, settled into a congenial way of life in which he was free to indulge his interests in book collecting and writing about the humanistic dimensions of medicine—pursuits that absorbed him until his death.

Osler was passionately dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in the care of patients, in the teaching of students, and in the development of institutions, and he was thoroughly imbued with the importance of sustaining the humanistic and cultural roots of medicine. Whatever one's assessment of Osler's contributions to the grand edifice of medical science, Michael Bliss has evocatively revealed what it is about Osler that excited so much admiration in his day and that still has the power to inspire today. It was and is the full compass of a life wholly devoted to a professional calling in all its aspects—a life in which high ideals

were realized with dazzling virtuosity and panache. Osler's was not, as Milton put it, "a fugitive and cloistered virtue" but one that was expressed in the dust and heat of daily life where the fusion of science and humanism that is medicine at its best finds its "immortal garland."

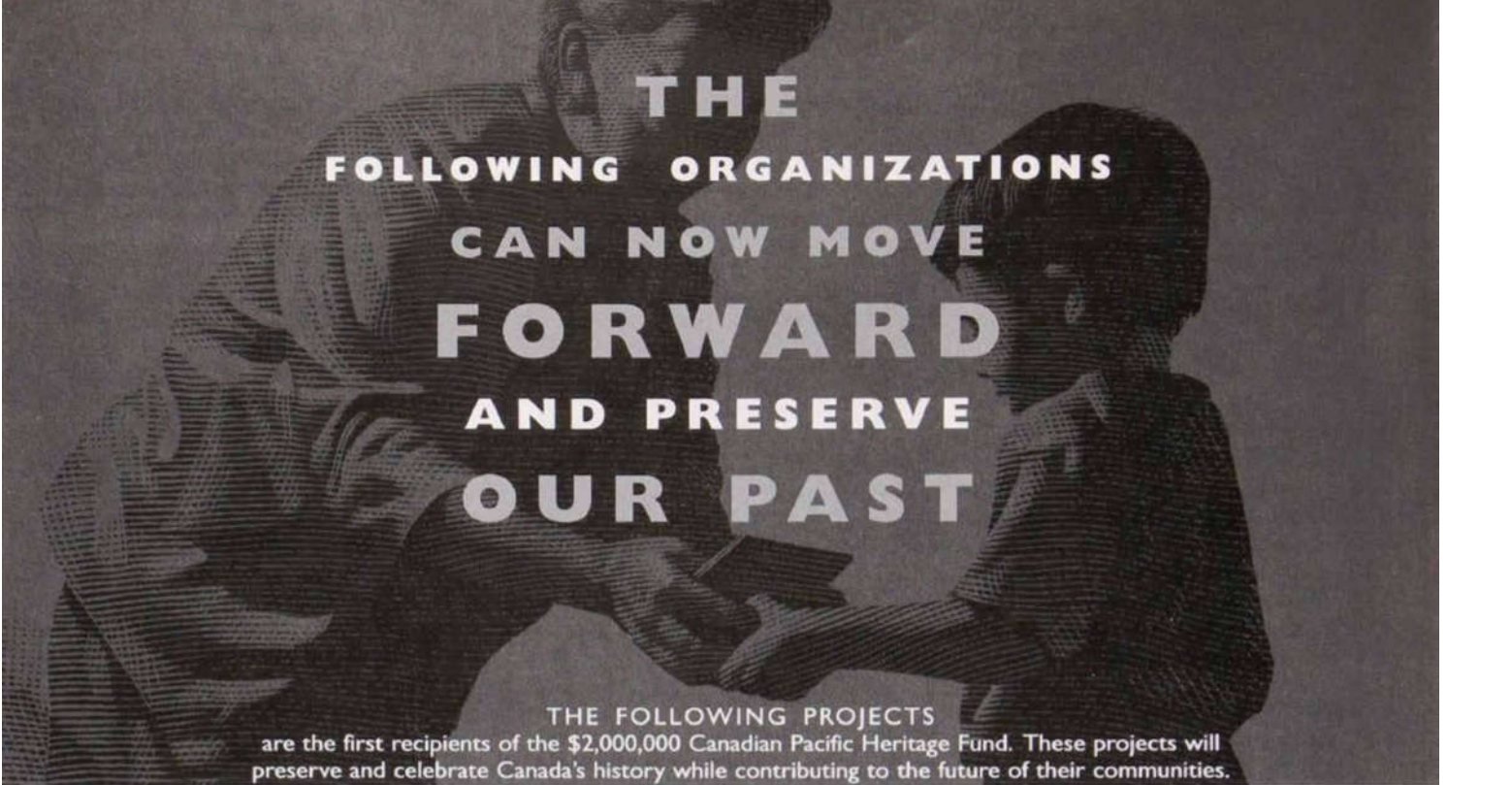
In the sesquicentennial of Osler's birth, Michael Bliss has given us an engaging account of the life of a man who many regarded as the greatest physician of his era. Bliss provides ample evidence for his conclusion that "the Osler of history was a man who for the most part lived up to his shining image." It is a clear-eyed portrayal that will appeal as much to the lay reader as to the medical professional, for it brings to life a complete man who came closer than most to being the best he could be.

Reviewed by Dr. Arnold Naimark, professor of medicine and physiology, and director of the Centre for Advancement of Medicine at the University of Manitoba.



Unfriendly Skies

This exciting title, *Double Cross*, promises—and delivers—a story of intrigue, conflict, character revelation, and ultimately personal and national losses. Winnipeg author Shirley Render states: "the



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**Mining Heritage Committee
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Mining Heritage Monument

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myth of [C.D.] Howe [then federal minister of transport] and his airline needs to be re-examined," and obligingly sets out to expose factual stories that lurk behind official versions.

Civil aviation in Canada was not kick-started, but kicked—under piles of government memos. "That the government made four changes in the administration of aviation within ten years, and allowed the air force to perform civil government duties and to usurp business from the commercial companies, demonstrates its ambivalence on aviation development," notes Render. "To say that the Canadian government was slow to realize the potential of commercial aviation for Canada's economic well-being would be an understatement."

With flying business carried out by three factions (RCAF, i.e., government; civil government air operations, i.e., government; and commercial companies), all grouped under the Department of National Defence, the latter received short shrift and no subsidies. It wasn't until 1920 that the first real attempt was made to use aircraft for commercial transport purposes, in the "rediscovery" of Canada's North.

Enter James A. Richardson.

By 1926, Richardson was already a successful entrepreneur involved in several operations, including a Winnipeg-based grain exporting business, James Richardson & Sons Ltd. He established Western Canada Airways Limited (WCA), and chose the Canada goose as the company's logo.

A number of historic flights made by WCA air crew aided in mapping of hitherto unexplored areas, discoveries of mineral deposits, and establishment of mines in Canada's North. This "explosion of exploration" heralded what Render terms "the most colourful, adventure-crammed and remarkable era of Canada's aviation history."

By 1930 the company's fifty aircraft covered northwest Canada from Pacific to Arctic coasts, and Richardson felt confident that the government would name his company as Canada's national airline. It was not to be. Understandably perhaps, the story line bogs with quotes from myriad letters, memos, and notes to and from various factions. Throughout the never-ending

combat, Richardson is portrayed as ambitious, smart, gentlemanly, well-liked, and well-connected, attributes that initially helped him to struggle through the bureaucratic red tape that continually threatened to tangle and curtail his dreams.

But politics ruled the airways, and Render cites numerous examples of the bumbles that ensued, especially regarding the tendering of lucrative mail contracts. While a trans-Canada airway was being proposed, memos were the main things flying.

A serious blow was dealt to Richardson when, in 1934, the Trans Canada Airways Committee did not recommend his company, by now called Canadian Airways, as the "chosen instrument."

Instead, the well-financed and government-backed Trans-Canada Airlines (TCA) was formed and injury followed insult, culminating in a raid on Canadian Airways for pilots, engineers, and other operations personnel. When James A. Richardson suffered a fatal heart attack—directly attributable, say the family, "to the Airways"—Richardson's widow, Muriel, stepped in to manage the family concerns. This she did admirably. In 1941 the Richardson family sold its precious, but unprofitable, airline; and the following year the company and eight smaller companies metamorphosed into Canadian Pacific Airlines, becoming a viable challenge to TCA.

Although the story marks major turning points in Canada's aviation history, Render laments that "the memory of the public is short." Few people today know of James A. Richardson's efforts or of the betrayal he suffered "at the hands of government officials whom the public fondly remembers." The author makes no attempt to hide her deep admiration for Richardson and his work, and doesn't hesitate to give various government officials sound spankings for their lack of foresight and/or integrity.

Double Cross, based on research for Render's master's thesis, is not an easy read, but essential for anyone interested in the history of civil aviation in Canada. It's an old story but a significant one, a must for library reference shelves.

Reviewed by Shirlee Smith Matheson, a Calgary author who has written many books on aviation history, including *Flying the Frontiers*, vol. III, recently published by Detselig Enterprises.

Party Québécois

In Julian Barnes's recent novel, *England, England*, the concept developer for a historical theme park takes the consulting historian to task for his profession's insulated and obscurantist approach to writing. "I've tried to read a few history books myself," he explains, but "it's a closed system." He continues, "It's like looking for the tag to unwrap a CD—the strip doesn't seem to start anywhere no matter how many times you run your fingernail around it." As Barnes's concept developer suggests, finding the right balance between a serious, well-supported academic study of a historical event and the desire to produce a book that will prove both interesting and



Simon Fraser's River

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THE ART OF NATION-BUILDING

Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary



H.V. NELLES

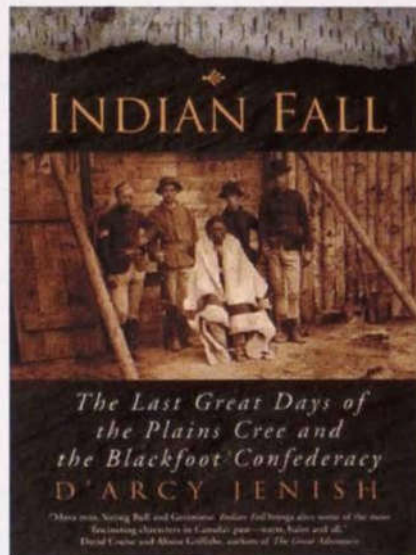
accessible to a broad audience is a difficult task. H.V. Nelles's history of Quebec's 1908 tercentenary celebrations, *The Art of Nation-Building*, succeeds in finding that balance.

Utilizing a wide variety of sources, including paintings, photographs, and souvenirs, Nelles shows readers how the tercentenary reflected the political and social concerns of the time and, in fact, "turned social structure into performance art." The event itself was ostensibly designed to commemorate the founding of Quebec by Champlain in 1608, but it told other stories as well. Hindered by the awkward legacy of the Conquest and imbued with contemporary martial and imperial overtones, the tercentenary served as a battlefield for competing political and social interests. Strained relations between French- and English-Canadians, and between Protestants and Catholics, combined with national, provincial, and civic rivalries to make this exercise in commemoration a complex and controversial affair.

The organization of the tercentenary itself, by no means a smooth and orderly process, reveals the extent to which a number of groups sought to use the tercentenary to further their own interests. Linguistic and cultural concerns loomed large in the original discussions among members of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society, while local politicians employed the celebrations in their attempts to extract civic

improvements out of the provincial and federal governments. Moreover, Canada's new governor general, Earl Grey, saw in the celebrations a suitable tool for forging closer ties between French- and English-Canadians, and for emphasizing the benefits of a strong commitment to the Empire. One result of these competing interests and tensions—a historical pageant—is fascinating, and more than a little bizarre. The compromise endpoint for this reenactment of Quebec's history was the Conquest—a conquest in which Wolfe's defeat of Montcalm was reinvented as a scene in which British and French soldiers met on the Plains of Abraham more as brothers or allies than mortal enemies.

Nelles provides an intimate story of selective amnesia on the part of the tercentenary's supporters and organizers. Academic historians will find this a valuable study for a great many reasons, particularly for the light it sheds on the tensions between a variety of ethnic and political groupings in Canadian society, but also, to cite just one example, for Nelles's intricate study of native participation and representation in the celebrations. Aboriginal participation in the pageant was certainly scripted by the organizers, but Nelles skillfully shows how native actors seized this opportunity to remind the Canadian public that they were "a living, reproducing, thriving presence."



Because of the accessible way in which such insights are presented, this book deserves a popular audience as well. It offers an evocative portrait of Canadian society at the turn of the century and a detailed but accessible analysis of the attempts by organizers and participants to overcome, even if only for a fleeting moment, the ethnic and political divisions of the period. Understanding how politicians and other elites understood their own position on national unity at the turn of the century provides readers with an opportunity to think more reflexively about their own sense of belonging and entitlement in our contemporary national unity debates. The optimism of Lord Grey and others will undoubtedly prove inspiring to some readers and perhaps juvenile and naive to others. The book, itself, helps to prove something else—that detailed historical monographs written by university professors can be both educational and entertaining.

Michael Dawson is a PhD student in history at Queen's University and the author of *The Mountie from Dime Novel to Disney*.

Native Twilight

D'Arcy Jenish sensed from his boyhood in Saskatchewan that he had not learned much about the drama of the life of the Indian people. The saga of the opening of the Canadian West "swept these [Indian] events into the shadows," and the author feels compelled to revive them. The title *Indian Fall* appears to be an ambiguous play on words; *fall* could refer to a season, as the end of the time of Indian independence, or it could refer to "a fall" as in the demise or end of an Indian way of life. One wonders if a clearer or more imaginative title could have been found.

Much of the content of Jenish's work exists in previously published books, including: Hugh Dempsey's *Big Bear: The End of Freedom* and *Crowfoot: Chief of the Blackfoot*; Payepot and His People by Abel Watetch; *Blood Red the Sun* by William B. Cameron; and *Loyal Till Death: Indians and the*

North-West Rebellion by Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser.

While Jenish's material is garnered largely from existing works, he does a credible job in reconstructing the main threads of Indians' stories for a general readership not well acquainted with Indian history. He reveals their lives sympathetically and with regard to their humanity.

In Part 1, "Buffalo Days," Jenish profiles the youth and development of the four Indian leaders, Big Bear, Poundmaker, Piapot, and Crowfoot. In Part 2, "Freedom's End," he recounts the period from the signing of treaties in the mid-1870s to the debacle of the North-West Rebellion in 1885. In Part 3, "A New World Rises," the author looks at the aftermath of the lives of the four chiefs, the trials and punishments of Big Bear and Poundmaker, and the hardships and challenges faced by Piapot and Crowfoot.

The significance of the lives of these Indian leaders revolves around the events of the 1870s and 1885. The fate of the Indians after the rebellion

remained obscure, largely because journalists who had been paying a great deal of attention to the Riel trial left Regina once his trial was finished. Besides, it was commonly accepted at the time that Big Bear and Poundmaker had been allies of Riel and therefore their convictions were not unexpected.

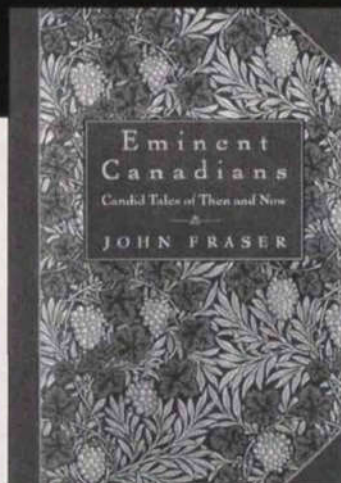
Unfortunately, the issue of the exoneration of convicted leaders such as Big Bear and Poundmaker is not addressed by Jenish. Significant activity has occurred on this front including Justice Minister Alan Rock's 1997 visit to the Poundmaker Reserve. After listening to the elders and band members' arguments for the pardon of Poundmaker, Rock hired a researcher to look into the facts and the possibility that the Poundmaker jury did not have full information. As well, a group of the descendants of Big Bear's band, spread out over Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Montana, have begun pressuring for reinstatement of their band, which was dispersed following the rebellion.

Indian Fall contributes little new to

the story, with the exception of a closer look at the experiences of Big Bear and Poundmaker at Stony Mountain Penitentiary. From a scholarly perspective, the lack of referencing of quotations and sources is a shortcoming that limits the book's usefulness as a textbook. There is little in the way of ethno-historical work to open up new understanding of Indian actions and motives. There is the occasional historical inaccuracy, such as a supposed skirmish between Poundmaker's camp and three scouts, an event which has been confused with the incident at Fort Pitt. As well, there is a discrepancy in the number of white prisoners held by Big Bear—seventy according to one account and twenty-eight according to another. But these are minor flaws. As an effort to make more accessible the stories of these important Indian leaders to the general public, the book does succeed.

Reviewed by Blair Stonechild, a Plains Cree and professor of Indian Studies at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, Regina.

History in the making, then and now



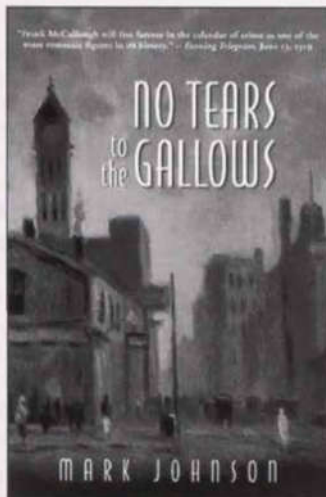
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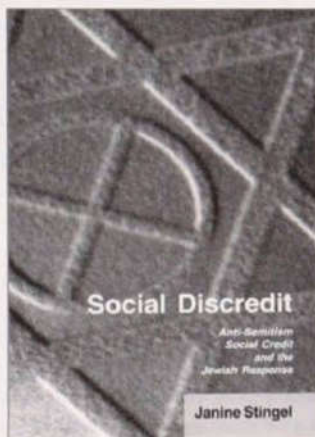
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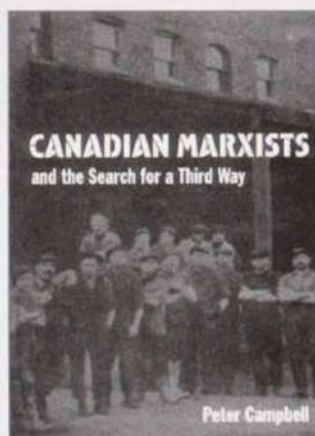
"This is a masterful, insightful study of a Canadian community under attack. Using new sources Stigel presents both a stinging indictment of the obsessive anti-Semitism underlying the Social Credit movement and a fascinating look inside the Jewish community as it defends itself against this frightening assault on its existence in Canada." Irving Abella

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Betsy Beattie

"*Obligation and Opportunity* is based on a profound insight: that women's particular experience of leaving home is an important key, an interpretive centrepiece, to understanding the political economy and culture of out-migration which are at the core of post-Confederation Maritime history." Gary Burrill, author of *Away: Maritimers in Massachusetts, Ontario, and Alberta*.



CANADIAN MARXISTS AND THE SEARCH FOR A THIRD WAY

Peter Campbell

"An interesting and important book ... Campbell puts forward a well-considered argument that will shape the future of the history of Canadian social thought and radical movement." James Naylor, Department of History, Brandon University.

STEAMBOAT CONNECTIONS

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Frank Mackey

"*Steamboat Connections* makes a substantial, original contribution to the descriptive history of marine transportation between Montreal and Kingston ... Mackey's mining of the notarial records is impressive." M. Stephen Salmon, business archivist, National Archives of Canada



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A recent and quite wonderful special issue of the *Beaver* reflected on various aspects of our history in the last century. Reading it was for me (and for many *Beaver* subscribers, no doubt) very personal, for I vividly remember so much of the subject matter. I felt a similar mingling of memory and history as I read a number of other recent works.

Domestic Goods, written by Joy Parr (a *Beaver* special issue author), considers the social significance of the immediate post-Second World War period. Here is domestic, not political, history—the Canadian household rather than the House of Commons. The late 1940s and the 1950s were a time of consumption that followed a long era of deprivation, Depression, and war. With higher incomes, buyers (especially women buyers) had new choices to make in the furnishing of their homes with domestic goods that are taken for granted today—items like washers, electric ranges, refrigerators. Parr discusses in depth the moral as well as the economic influences on such consumer purchases.

The Dionnes chronicles the saga of five Canadian celebrities, the quintuplets who were taken from their parents at birth, exploited by a government supposedly protecting them, psychologically abused by both family and media, and then neglected for years. The life of each quint is sketched, the experiences of siblings and other family members are recounted, various published and filmed versions of the story are summarized. Perhaps the most interesting episode is the book's recounting of the legal and public relations strategies required to bring, at last, some measure of "justice not charity" to the surviving sisters. Alas, the full story of the millions of dollars in "trust" monies and their untrustworthy management will probably never be told.

A midwife who assisted in the delivery of the quintuplets was a guest, in 1957, on the very first episode of *Front Page Challenge*, the show that became a fixture on Canadian television. Each

segment was an exercise in nostalgia as it looked back at a news story from the past. But the panelists, as they tried to guess each subject, were not simply pursuing trivia. Almost without exception, the persons or events featured were historically important. A new book, written by original panelist and noted journalist Alex Barris, relates the history of that enduring program (it lasted thirty-eight years). As I read the entertaining inside story of the show, I experienced an unexpected benefit: the book brought back many personal memories of the news events themselves.

I was similarly drawn into another book of memories, *Too Young To Fight*, in which eleven authors (most of them children's authors) tell how the Second World War altered their own childhoods. The book is aimed at a young adult audience, but it will appeal to many adults as well. The history of that dreadful period is not limited to military experiences, important as they were, for the war also profoundly affected civilians, especially children.

No change in Canadian culture in the last century, or more specifically, in the last third of the century, has been more dramatic and influential than the increased public role played by women. *Trailblazers* presents interviews with thirty-six of the most prominent women of our time, each in her own words telling her own personal

and professional life story. They all speak with self-satisfaction about their choices and achievements—in health services, in the arts, in business, in politics, in law, in science, in nearly every aspect of Canadian life—and nearly all of them are optimistic. Despite the hardships and inequities that still exist, clearly, thanks to women such as these, Canada is the better.

There are several recent collective minibiographies evaluating the significance of our country's prime ministers. J.L. Granatstein and Norman Hillmer in *Prime Ministers* not only discuss them all, they rank them from greatest to worst—even though a third of them served for two years or less each and thus can hardly be judged at all. Not surprisingly, I suppose—but unfairly, I think—the only woman, Kim Campbell, is ranked dead last. Nonetheless, the chapters are informative and they present a fresh perspective on past prominence. *Bastards & Boneheads*, by its very title, reveals what author Will Ferguson thinks of our leaders. Nobody is admirable. All prime ministers, as well as many other men (and a few women) in our nation's past, were, he determines, either bastards who succeeded and screwed Canada, or boneheads who failed and just screwed up. I found it too clever by half, or even three quarters. In *Egotists and Autocrats*, B.C. writer and critic George Bowering brings clarity and a wicked

Books Cited

■ *Domestic Goods:*

The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years

By Joy Parr. University of Toronto Press, 1999. 368 pages. \$60.00 hardcover; \$21.95 paper.

■ *The Dionnes*

By Ellie Teshler. Doubleday Canada, 1999. 324 pages. \$34.95 hardcover.

■ *Front Page Challenge:*

History of a Television Legend
By Alex Barris. Macmillan Canada, 1999. 231 pages. \$29.95 hardcover.

■ *Trailblazers: Women Talk*

About Changing Canada

By Judith Finlayson.

Doubleday Canada, 1999. 300 pages. \$34.95 hardcover.

■ *Too Young To Fight:*

Memories from Our Youth During World War II

Compiled by Priscilla Galloway. Stoddart Publishing, 1999. 207 pages. \$29.95 hardcover.

■ *Prime Ministers: Ranking Canada's Leaders*

By J. L. Granatstein & Norman Hillmer. Harper Collins, 1999. 234 pages. \$25.00 hardcover.

■ *Bastards & Boneheads:*

Canada's Glorious Leaders Past and Present

By Will Ferguson. Douglas & McIntyre, 1999. 326 pages. \$22.95 paper.

■ *Egotists and Autocrats: The Prime Ministers of Canada.*

By George Bowering. Viking, 1999. 558 pages. \$35.00 hardcover.

■ *Right Honourable Men: The Descent of Canadian Politics from Macdonald to Mulroney*

By Michael Bliss. Harper Collins, 1995. 336 pages. \$18.00 paper.

■ *Speaking for Myself:*

Politics and Other Pursuits
By Duff Roblin. Great Plains Publications, 1999. 253 pages. \$32.95 hardcover.



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humour to his sizing up of Canada's prime ministers, not to mention the revelation of some fascinating eccentricities of this otherwise earnest bunch. These volumes prompted me to read again—and recommend again—Michael Bliss's artful mapping of the same territory, *Right Honourable Men*.

Manitoba's Duff Roblin may not have become a prime minister—he did have a good run at becoming PC party leader just after Diefenbaker—but, as his published memoirs reveal, his career was certainly honourable. No "bonehead" he, and far too decent to be dubbed "bastard" either. In the 1950s

and 1960s, he transformed his provincial party (and helped change the party nationally) by being conservatively progressive and progressively conservative. He governed Manitoba for a decade and resigned before becoming stale or rigid. He failed nationally, but served ably in the Senate through the tumultuous times of the GST debates. His personal history concludes with forward-looking observations and pragmatically possible suggested changes. Whether or not Canada has the sense and courage to pay him heed, future historians will record. 

More Books Worth Noting

- *Warriors of the King: Prairie Indians in World War I*
Edited by L. James Dempsey.
Canadian Plains Research
Center, University of Regina,
1999. \$19.95 paper.

Indians were first refused, then allowed to enlist, then recruited, and then faced with their own conscription crisis—a sadly neglected bit of history is thoroughly analyzed.

- *Historical Dictionary of Canada*
By Barry M. Gough.
Scarecrow Press, 1999.
US\$55.00 hardcover.
This noted Canadian scholar's introductory reference work is designed especially for "foreigners," that is, Americans.

- *Far From Home: Canadians in the First World War*
By Bill Freeman and Richard Nielsen. McGraw-Hill
Ryerson, 1999. \$42.00
hardcover.

The book version of the television miniseries lauds Canada's vital military role in the war, but keeps the human realities always close at hand.

- *In Great Waters: The Epic Story of the Battle of the Atlantic 1939-1945*
By Spencer Dunmore.
McClelland & Stewart, 1999.
\$34.99 hardcover.

This popularly written book about battles at sea also emphasizes the importance of air power.

- *A History of the Canadian Dollar*
By James Powell. Bank of
Canada, 1999. \$4.00 paper.
A brief but highly informative summary of the ups and downs of our Canadian currency, from seventeenth-century card money to modern loonies—all neatly illustrated.

- *Eternal Prairie: Exploring Rural Cemeteries of the West*
By R. Adams. Fifth House,
1999. \$24.95 paper.

The many faces of prairie culture are revealed in the burial customs of various faiths—the memorial images are splendid, but the photographer/author's text brings them to life.

- *Companions of the Peace: Diaries and Letters of Monica Storrs, 1931-1939*
Edited by Vera Fast. University of Toronto Press, 1999.
\$50.00 hardcover; \$19.95
paper.

Very personal accounts, written for friends and supporters, of a decade of Anglican service in the frontier isolation of the Peace River Block in northeastern British Columbia.

- *A History of the Canadian Army Veterinary Corps in the Great World War 1914-1919*
By Cecil French. C.A.V. Barker
Museum of Canadian Veterinary
History, 1999. \$32.00
paper.

They looked after the horses and mules, treating diseases and wounds, but the book's focus is on the men in this singularly detailed study.

- *No Place to Run: The Canadian Corps and Gas Warfare in the First World War*
By Tim Cook. UBC Press, 1999.
\$24.95 paper.

A book that forces thinking about the unthinkable, for, as this careful study shows, the destructive effects of gas warfare were psychological as well as physical.

- *Canada's Navy: The First Century*
By Marc Milner. University
of Toronto Press, 1999.
\$45.00 hardcover.

A comprehensive work that charts the political as well as the military waters through which Canadian ships have sailed.

- *From Lochnew to Manitoulin: A Highland Soldier's Tour Through Upper Canada*
Edited by Scott A. McLean.
Natural Heritage Books.
1999. \$18.95 paper.

A young lieutenant's 1838 diary of eight weeks on duty in the colonies.

THE Society **First of its Kind**

The Provincial Historical Societies Conference, hosted by the Society in Toronto February 18–20, brought together twenty-three delegates representing ten provincial and two territorial historical societies. Response to the conference was positive; one attendee described the event as a happy combination of the “inspirational and the practical.” Among the outcomes of the conference was the passing of a unanimous resolution, proposed by Newfoundland and Quebec, that called upon the “provincial and territorial governments of Canada to recognize the value of history in education, and to develop and implement dedicated history courses in their curriculum requirements for both public and private schools.” Each society would use the resolution as it saw fit in their respective provinces/territories.

Because this was the first time representatives of provincial and territorial historical societies met, it presented a rare opportunity to meet, network, and exchange ideas and philosophies. The result was so positive, CNHS is exploring the potential for another conference for 2002.



René Durocher

Board Walks

At the Society's seventh annual meeting in June, Joanne Burgess and René Durocher were elected to the board for a three-year term.

René Durocher is professor of history at the Université de Montréal, where he has taught, with exception of three

years at York University, since 1965. A specialist in post-Confederation Canadian political history, he has written or cowritten six books and numerous articles and papers, and lectured at universities in France and Israel. He is a past president of the Institut d'histoire de l'Amérique française and of the Société des professeurs d'histoire du Québec, where he played a key role in lobbying the Quebec government to reestablish compulsory teaching of history in secondary schools. He is a past president of the Canadian Historical Association and is a member of the Royal Society of Canada.

Joanne Burgess is professor of history at the Université du Québec à Montréal, where she has taught since 1981. An expert in Canadian economic and social history, she has devoted most of her research to industrial and urban history, working class history, and family history. She is a past president of the Institut d'histoire de l'Amérique française, is currently a board member of the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada, and through her interest in public history has collaborated with the Écomusée du fier monde, a popular history museum in Montreal. The author or coauthor of two books and numerous papers, Joanne Burgess has lectured extensively in Canada, Italy, Spain, and Belgium.



Peter C. Newman accepting his award from Pierre Berton.

2000 Pierre Berton Award

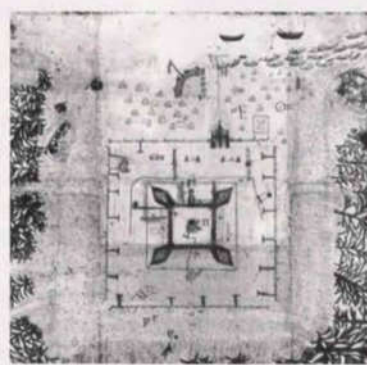
Writer and journalist Peter C. Newman, author of more than twenty books chronicling Canadian business and political power, was honoured February 19 at a dinner at the Albany Club in Toronto for distinguished achievement in popularizing Canadian history. Attended by 130 people, including members of the Toronto business and history communities, four previous Berton Award recipients, the finalists of the Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History, CNHS donors, directors of the Hudson's Bay History Foundation, and delegates of the Provincial Historical Societies Conference, the special event dinner helped elevate the profile and awareness of the Berton Award with extensive media coverage.



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A Year Inland

The Journal of a Hudson's Bay Company Winterer

Barbara Belyea
editor

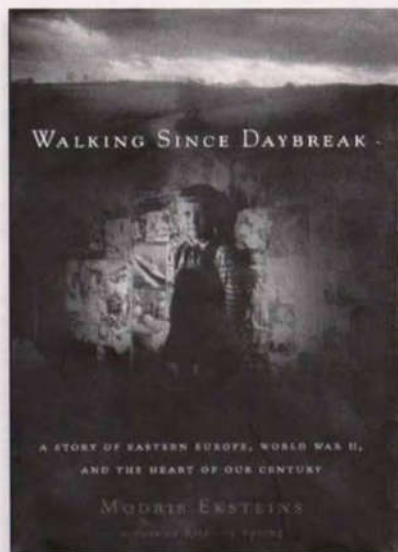
In June 1754, Anthony Henday, a young Hudson's Bay Company employee, set out from York Factory to winter with “trading Indians” along the Saskatchewan River. He adapted willingly and easily to their way of life; he also kept a journal in which he described the plains region and took note of rival French traders' success at their inland posts. The original journal disappeared, but four copies (1755–1782) survived. *A Year Inland* presents all four copies together with an assessment of their accuracy.



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The Migrant and the Borderlands



Modris Eksteins, who today is a history professor in Toronto, was born in Riga, Latvia, in December 1943—not a good time to be born there. He came into a world of Nazi gauleiters, Soviet invasions, refugee migrations, thousand-bomber raids, and displaced-persons camps. His family, like millions of other Central and Eastern Europeans, survived, more or less by hazard, as their nations, their cities, even their societies, collapsed amid war, hunger, dispossession, flight, and exile. In 1949, the Eksteins became four of the 3,331 Latvian refugees Canada accepted that year.

Fifty years on, Eksteins's bones still bear the traces of childhood malnutrition. And he is still rethinking the

world he experienced as a one-year-old DP—a “displaced person [in Berlin in 1945] at the nadir of the twentieth century ... the ultimate placeless place.” His recent book, *Walking Since Daybreak*, grapples with the catastrophe that was Europe at the end of the war, and with the displacement such a subject induces in the historian confronted with what Eksteins calls “a swamp-land of meaningless meaning.”

Walking Since Daybreak is also a book about Canada—the Canada that was transformed during the late 1940s and early 1950s by postwar immigration. In the Toronto neighbourhood I now live in, many of my neighbours are elderly Poles, Estonians, Ukrainians, and Latvians. Or they are their children, come here as infants or Canadian-born, but still strongly marked by their origins in European turmoil. Even my own family, though it came from Britain and by choice rather than exile, was part of that vast postwar movement of populations. Born a few years after that war, I always understood my family and our presence in Canada as consequences of the Second World War. In that we shared the experience of millions.

The Eksteins family settled in Winnipeg and then Toronto, with limited prospects and all the insecurities of the dispossessed alien newcomer. Young Modris, however, won a scholarship. He proved himself a brilliant student and returned to Europe in 1965 as a Rhodes Scholar, and he became in time a historian of modern Europe. He set himself “to understanding the major horrors of the twen-

tieth century,” writing first about Hitler’s accession to power and then about the First World War.

Eksteins discovered, however, that grappling with horror left him grappling with questions of “form” in the writing of history. How, he asked, does the historian write histories of inexplicable things? His First World War book, *The Rites of Spring*, considered how avant-garde art—seeking to destroy the complacent bourgeois world—had been mirrored in the politics that launched the First World War and ultimately fascism. Nijinsky’s icon-smashing *Rites of Spring* ballet, suggested Eksteins, was mirrored in the cult of rebirth through destruction that shaped Nazism. Comparing the aesthetics of ballet and total war produced an unconventional history. *Rites of Spring* was well received in cultural and intellectual circles, but Eksteins was beginning to thumb his nose at the time-honoured rules that dictate the form of most academic writing in history.

Eksteins’s new book, *Walking Since Daybreak*, moves on to the Second World War—and to new experiments in form. Eksteins offers a book made of short discontinuous episodes. A section summarizing twentieth-century eastern European politics is interrupted by an episode in the history of the Eksteins family a century ago. The collisions between fascism, communism, and small nations like Latvia are juxtaposed against the travails of the author’s dimly recorded peasant great-grandmother. Grieta Pluta’s story is in turn interrupted by details of the author’s own formation as a student of history.

When I talked to Modris Eksteins recently, he described all these episodes as parallel journeys. *Walking Since Daybreak* is about Europe's journey to 1945, but also about "the journey my family took from northern Europe to Canada. And my own journey as a writer of history. And in a sense, the journey the Canadian identity and many national identities have taken: into a kind of exile, into borderlands where the frontiers have blurred."

"As an historian," says Eksteins, "I have moved away from the big countries at the centre – and also away from the big Historical Truth. That is why the book is packaged as it is. It would be untruthful to package it as most of our historical colleagues still do, to have an introduction, a set of arguments laid out, and a neat conclusion and wrapping up."

Too much history is still written, he regrets, as if all history were a record of victory and moral progress. "You can't write the old history if you are confronting subjects like the nothingness of 1945."

Walking Since Daybreak is also – marginally – about Canada and the changes postwar population movements wrought in it. Eksteins's episodes emphasize the shock and bewilderment of his family in 1949, and how alien this country felt. Reading it, I wondered if, in becoming a historian of Europe, at home in intellectual debates and historical communities from Oxford to Riga, Modris Eksteins had perhaps followed the path his father Rudolfs, the lonely exile pining for a world destroyed in



Born in Latvia in the middle of the Second World War, Modris Eksteins spent his early childhood in the catastrophe that was postwar Europe. The experience shaped his approach to writing history, which includes a respect for the principle of uncertainty.

1945, had longed to follow.

For these days, we read of young Serb or Croat Canadians going off to get themselves killed in the Balkan wars of the 1990s, of second- or third-generation Ukrainian Canadians discovering themselves back "home" in Kiev, even of the Montreal academic Vaira Viki-Freibergs, who recently moved to Latvia to assist a new research institute there – and suddenly became president of Latvia. Did postwar "New Canadians" simply find in Canada a place of exile, to be endured until a return "home" was possible? I knew my own family never looked longingly back to Britain that way, but then we were willing immigrants, not refugees.

"I don't think my father ever became a Canadian," says Eksteins thoughtfully. "I don't think my mother has ever really considered herself a Canadian. There was never any sense of ingratitude in my parents, and they knew how fortunate they were to be here. But as a sense of identity ... it was more complex." For himself, however, he may indeed have returned to Europe. But when he left for Oxford, he took his Group of Seven prints to

remind him of "home." Indeed, given the nationalist orientation of eastern-European ethnic organizations in Canada since the 1950s, Eksteins is struck by how few go "back" now the small nations of Eastern Europe have reemerged.

For him, the Canadian story is one about borderlands. The identity of Canada sometimes seems as fluid and uncertain as Latvia's, and neither nation's survival is ever guaranteed. Modris Eksteins suspects that in a world where all lands become borderlands, history and the forms in which to write history are equally uncertain.

Is the historian left with nothing to say, then? Hardly. Modris Eksteins is thinking about a new book, on 1989, "the last great date of the twentieth century." He is pondering what form a historian might choose to represent that moment.

"I'm not sure that we will ever find a way to write history again in that confident, authoritative nineteenth-century style that has remained so influential in much of the twentieth century.

"And I think that is a positive thing! Never have there been more opportunities for writing history in interesting ways than there are now. For all forms of human expression, there is more freedom in the world now than there has ever been before. Historians have more opportunities available to them than ever before." ■

Walking Since Daybreak was published in 1999 by Key Porter. In March 2000, the Writers' Trust awarded it the inaugural Pearson Prize in Nonfiction.

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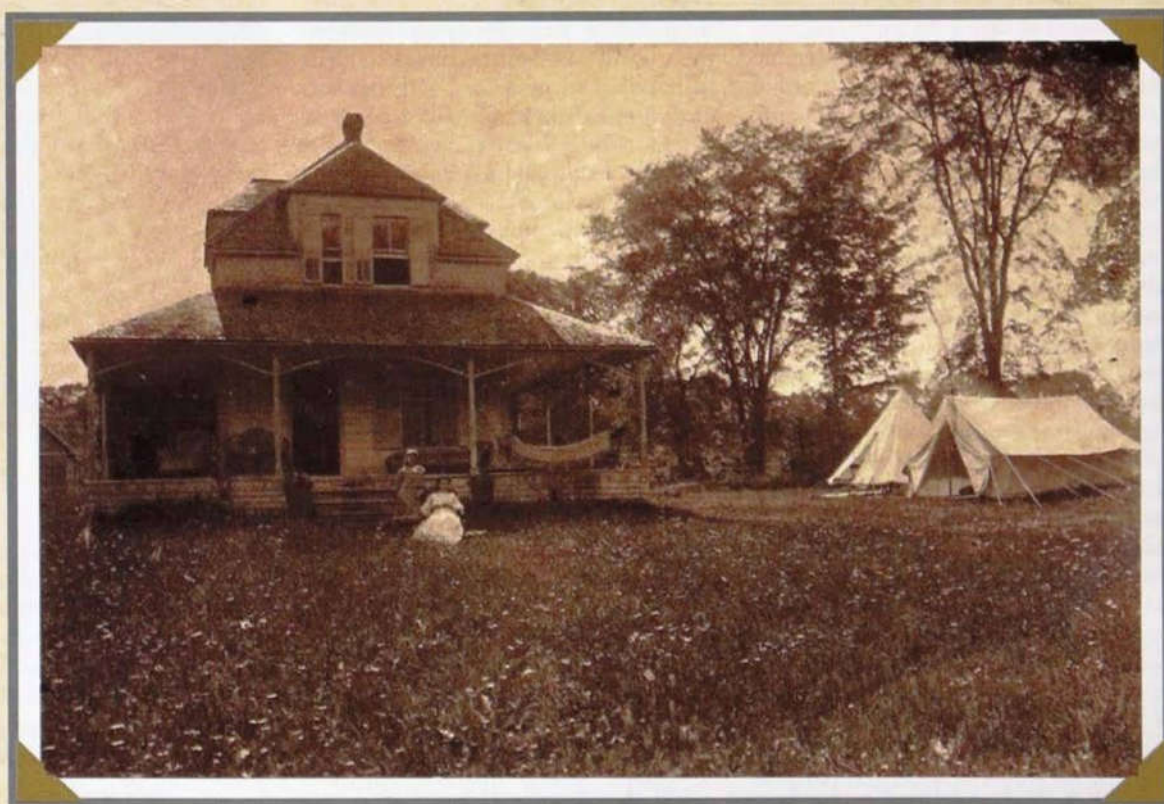
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Pat Tarr, who submitted this photograph to the *Beaver*, is an associate professor of education at the University of Calgary. She is the granddaughter of Vida Cartwright Zimmerman, who died in 1981.

Idyll It is a summer day 'round about the turn of the last century. The setting is bucolic, almost remote, the cottage rather grand, the white tents a suggestion that children are about somewhere, probably off swimming. Vida Lois Cartwright, who will one day be Mrs. Otto Zimmerman, poses next to a woman who may be her older sister, Marion, or perhaps her mother, Ivy, who is the daughter-in-law of Sir Richard Cartwright, minister of trade in the Laurier government and a man of consequence in Ottawa.

The setting, in fact, is not so remote, at least by today's standards of time and travel. It is MacKay's Lake, an attraction in Rockcliffe, Ottawa's dowager suburb, today the

site of Stornoway, the leader of the Opposition's residence, and stately homes now turned into foreign embassies. But a hundred years ago, Rockcliffe was remote countryside, a place of retreat for those who could afford second homes and, increasingly (thanks to an electric streetcar line laid down in 1895), a day-outing destination for the labouring classes. These are the last days of Rockcliffe's isolation. Ottawa will burgeon in the new century. These are the last days, too, for the Cartwright cottage, as it will eventually make way for city roads and gracious residences. For Vida, life will bring a move to the Okanagan, then marriage, the birth of four daughters, early widowhood, and a long life in northern California. Though she will visit Ottawa now and again, she will find the city much changed. Summers at MacKay's Lake, where they swam and punted and fished and caught turtles, will seem like a dream. 



Do you have an old photograph that captures a moment, important or ordinary, in our country's history? If you would like to submit it for possible publication, have it copied at your local photo shop (please don't send priceless originals) and send it to: Album, c/o *The Beaver*, #478-167 Lombard Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0T6. Include a brief description of the photo, including its date and location. If possible, identify people in the photograph and provide further information about the event or situation illustrated. To have your copy returned, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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SO WE WILL.



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"The Canadians: Biographies of a Nation" features the real stories of the saints and sinners who built this country and have left a lasting impression. Part of Canadian History Wednesdays.

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EASTERN	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
8:00 AM			THE CAMPBELLS			SENSE OF HISTORY	SENSE OF HISTORY
8:30 AM			THE WAY WE WERE			ORIGINS	ORIGINS
9:00 AM			SKETCHES OF OUR TOWN				
9:30 AM			IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY			CANADIAN HISTORY	THE 20TH CENTURY
10:00 AM			SKETCHES OF OUR TOWN				
10:30 AM		FASHION QUEST (HISTORY BITES STARTING APRIL 10)					
11:00 AM		THE UNTOUCHABLES (COMBAT STARTING APRIL 25)				WORLDS BEST DOCUMENTARIES	WORLDS BEST MINI-SERIES
11:30 AM							
12:00 PM			RAT PATROL				
12:30 PM			GREAT CRIMES				
1:00 PM						THE WILD WEST	SCORCHED EARTH
1:30 PM							
2:00 PM			HISTORY ON FILM				
2:30 PM						WESTERN MATINEE	HISTORY ON FILM
3:00 PM							
3:30 PM		FASHION QUEST (HISTORY BITES STARTING MAY 1)					
4:00 PM			DESTINATION: HISTORY				
4:30 PM						HISTORY BITES	HISTORY BITES
5:00 PM			THE UNTOUCHABLES				
5:30 PM						ANCIENT HISTORY	HISTORY OF WAR
6:00 PM			IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY				
6:30 PM			THE WAY WE WERE				
7:00 PM			ARCHAEOLOGY			DRAMA SERIES	DRAMA SERIES
7:30 PM			FASHION QUEST (HISTORY BITES STARTING APRIL 10)				
8:00 PM			IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY			COLD WAR	THE ROYAL HOUR
8:30 PM			GREAT CRIMES				
9:00 PM							
9:30 PM	20TH CENTURY MONDAYS	ANCIENT HISTORY TUESDAYS	CANADIAN HISTORY WEDNESDAYS	HISTORY OF WAR THURSDAYS			
10:00 PM					HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM
10:30 PM							
11:00 PM							
11:30 PM							
12:00 AM							
12:30 AM	20TH CENTURY MONDAYS	ANCIENT HISTORY TUESDAYS	CANADIAN HISTORY WEDNESDAYS	HISTORY OF WAR THURSDAYS			
1:00 AM					HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM
1:30 AM							
2:00 AM							
2:30 AM							
3:00 AM							
3:30 AM			CENTURY OF WARFARE			COLD WAR	THE ROYAL HOUR
4:00 AM			GREAT CRIMES				
4:30 AM			ARCHAEOLOGY			DRAMA SERIES	DRAMA SERIES
5:00 AM			CRUSADE IN EUROPE				
5:30 AM			RAT PATROL				SENSE OF HISTORY
6:00 AM						HISTORY OF WAR	ORIGINS
6:30 AM			CENTURY OF WARFARE				CABLE IN THE CLASSROOM
7:00 AM			FRONT PAGE CHALLENGE				SENSE OF HISTORY
7:30 AM			OLYMPICA			THE CANADIANS	ORIGINS

Program changes may occur.

